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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM



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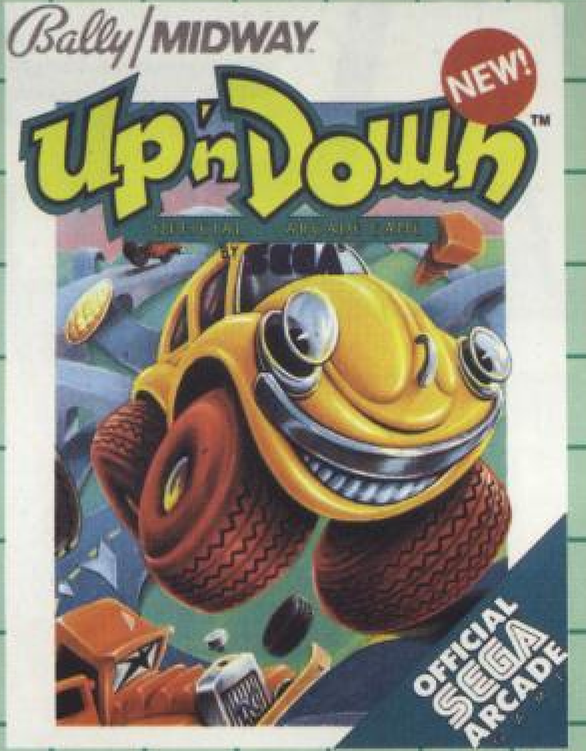
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

PRIZES GALORE!

IN OUR COMPETITIONS

OLIVER FREY







OUR ARCADE GAM
HITS, WE BROUGH

Here at Sega, we like to think we know a thing or two about quality. Our reputation has been forged in the World's most competitive market, the American arcades. Discerning arcade players; and they know a thing or two as well; have voted our games some of



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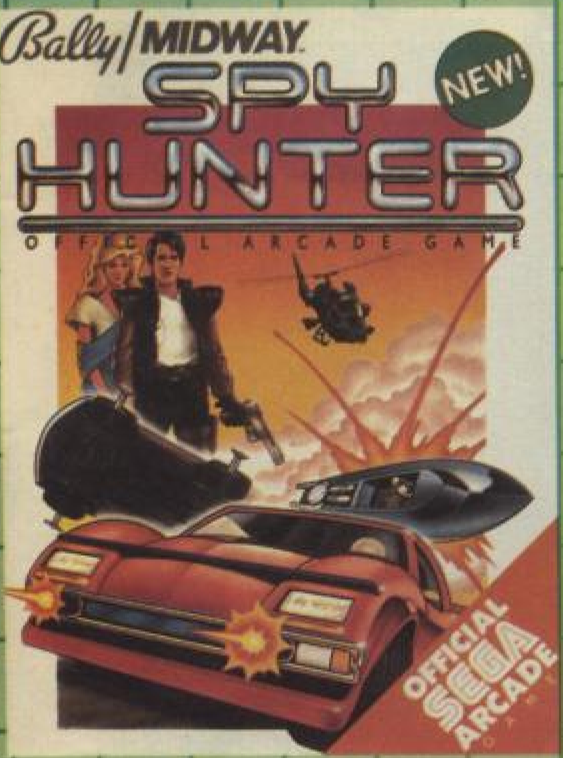


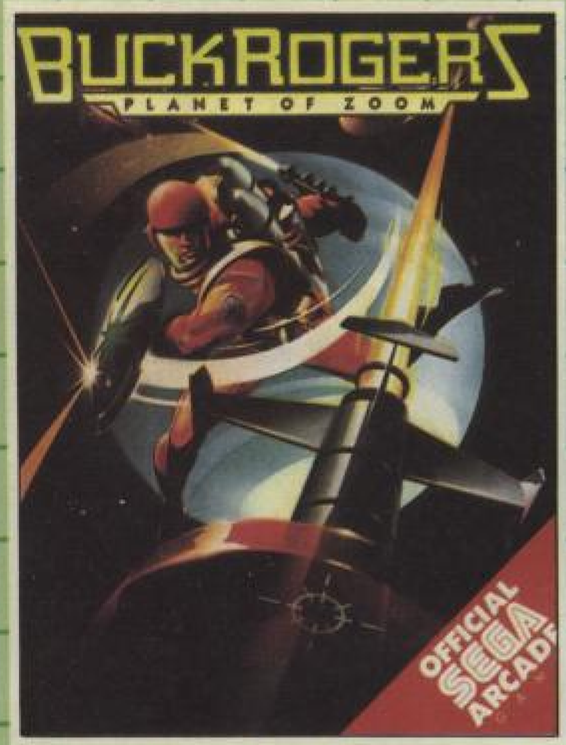
leap dead ends, canyons and crush anyone who gets in the way! No. 1 in the Play Meter Conversions Poll, UP'N'DOWN is one smash hit that really is a smash!

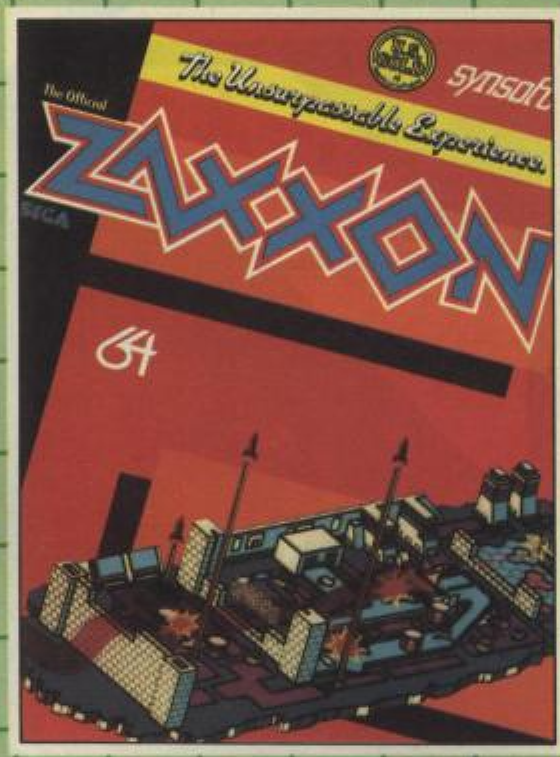
And if all that doesn't drive you to drink then TAPPER will! This has got to be the loudest, wackiest saloon bar there's ever been. The action gets truly out of hand as the overworked bar tender scrambles to serve his unruly (and very thirsty) customers.

	Commodore 64	Spectrum	Amstrad
SPY HUNTER	NOW	NOW	SOON
TAPPER	NOW	NOW	SOON
UP'N'DOWN	NOW	SOON	SOON
CONGO BONGO	NOW	SOON	SOON
ZAXXON**	NOW*	NOW	SOON
BUCK ROGERS	NOW	NOW	SOON

*Published by Synapse Software Corp. under licence from Sega Enterprises Ltd. **Atari version of ZAXXON available on cassette and published by Datasoft Inc. under licence from Sega Enterprises Ltd.







MES WERE SUCH BIG HT THEM HOME!

Work your way through the wild Western Saloon to the Sports Bar. From there to the slam dancing Punk Bar and into the Space Bar where the customers really are out of this world!

Down to earth with SPYHUNTER from Bally Midway. But don't expect any chance of a rest. After all, this was the number 1 arcade game of 1984 and now you're in the hot-seat of the deadliest machine on four wheels. You're after enemy spies. The situation is life and death. You'll need every weapon you've got–machine guns and guided missiles, oil slicks and smoke screens. But the enemy is everywhere. On the road, in the water, even in the air. So you'll have to be more than fast to stay alive in SPYHUNTER; you'll need brains and guts as well!

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mission to do battle with the deadly ZAXXON. Countless others have gone before; now it's your turn to do battle. You'll quickly see why ZAXXON is one of only ten games that have made it into Electronic Games' American Hall of Fame.





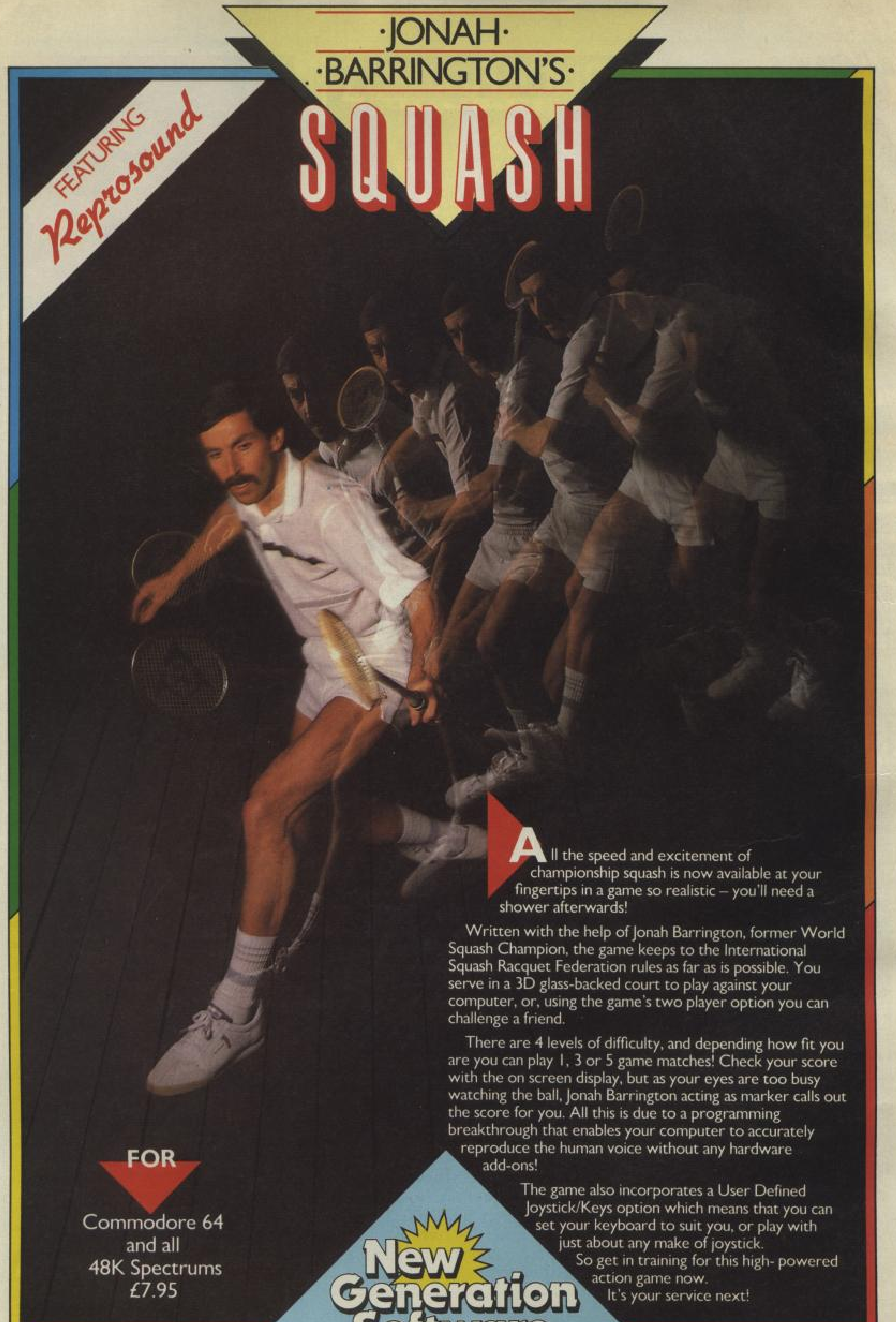
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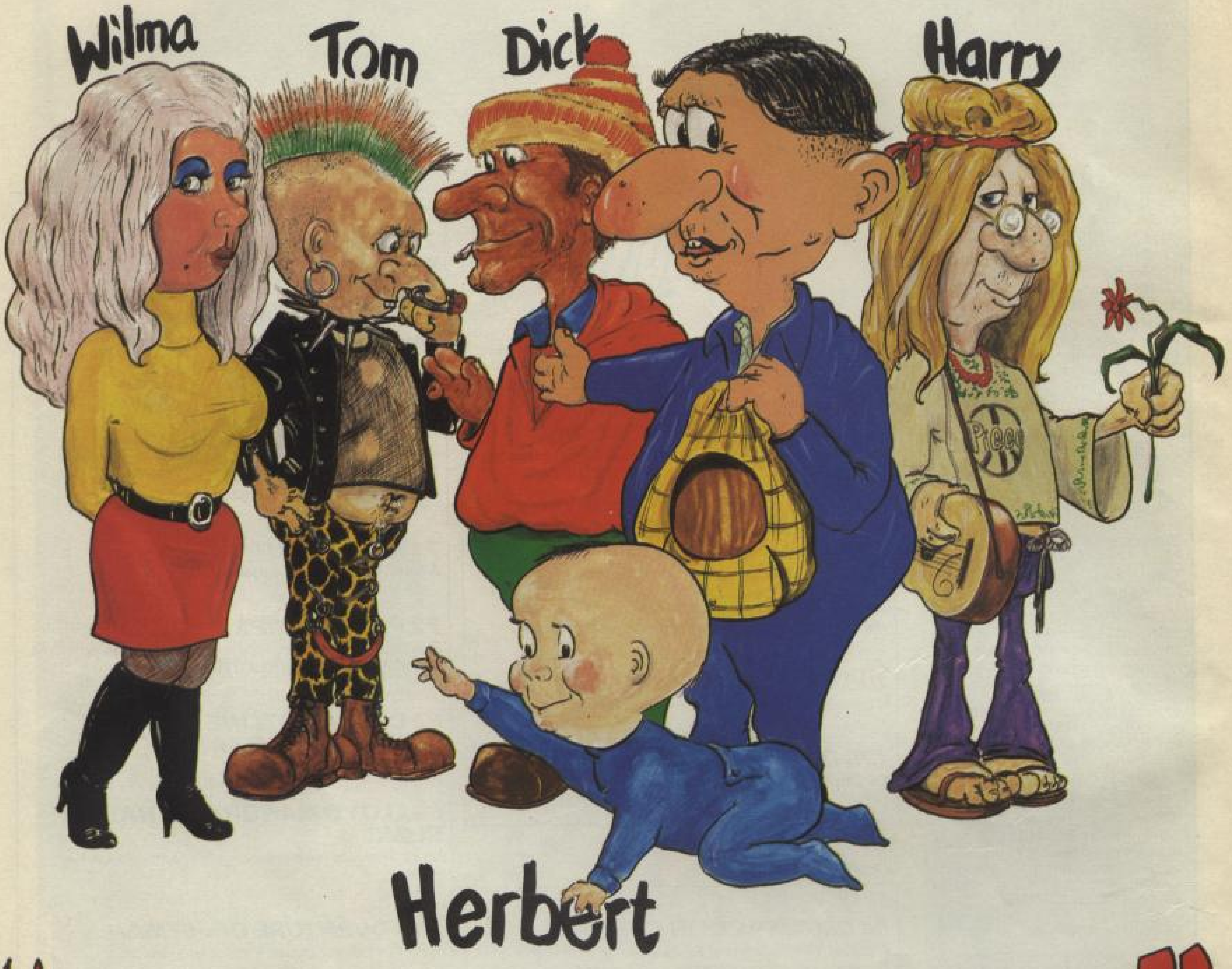
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D.I.Y

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THIS TORMENTED BUSINESS

I was struck by reading a phrase in an edition of a software trade paper, it was, '... this tormented business of ours.' It rather neatly summed up the first six months of this year in which the pre-Christmas gloom merchants appear to have been vindicated. To the vanished or quietly disappearing software houses, we can now add **Bug-Byte**, **Fantasy** and **Micromania**, the latter two certainly helped on their way by the collapse of software distributor **Tiger**.

Bug-Byte looked like it was ailing for some time despite, or in spite, of rumoured tie-up deals with Argus. A shame really, because it severs any final link with the original flowering of Liverpool programming talent that began with Bug-Byte and flowed into Imagine, Software Projects and many of the programming houses that now exist. Micromania had too much stock of their latest game in Tiger to withstand the loss of revenue. The irony is that, by all accounts, *Future Project* sold very well, mostly through Menzies with whom Tiger largely dealt, but because Tiger ended up owing Menzies money in the form of credit for returned, unsold tapes, companies like Micromania who should have received payment did not — for Menzies dealt with Tiger and not Micromania.

The way in which companies go bust is often telling. There are, of course, very strict legal rules covering the matter, but they are often easy to get around. Bug-Byte's receivers informed all creditors (including CRASH) of the situation. Micromania's Dominic Wood wrote a letter to the effect that he was bankrupt — at least you know where you stand. Fantasy's demise was less ethical. For several weeks managing director **Paul Dyer** was unavailable because he was 'moving house', according to the female voice answering the phone. Then the voice was unavailable — then the phone was disconnected. Paul Dyer and Fantasy had vanished, leaving huge unpaid debts behind. According to one programmer who is still owed his last salary, it was a real moonlight flit. Like many others, he has no idea where Paul Dyer has gone to ground. There are rumours that a new 'Fantasy' aims to rise from the ashes, probably with the near completed *Super Pyramid* game.

I hope not, Paul, I really hope not...

FROM BACK ROOMS TO BOARDROOMS

There is a prevalent feeling among many figures in this tormented business that more software houses will bite the dust this summer, but what is tending to happen is a swallowing of smaller individual companies into larger conglomerates. Britons like to think of themselves as individuals, so we frown on this, feeling (rightly so at times) that we will get less value for money from the giants, and that genius and talent will be strangled in favour of conformist marketing policies.

There is nothing new in this; it seems inevitable that all 'new' industries must start in back bedrooms and move to the conglomerate boardroom. If an industry is worth it, big money will move in. Competition increases, tougher marketing emerges, and the under-capitalised pioneer suffers. The benefits of programmers marketing their games through the larger software houses shouldn't be overlooked though. The programmer is free to concentrate on what he does best while being linked to sufficient finance to market the game well, and at the same time is freed from the real headache of all companies — financial controls (a euphemism for 'getting the sods to pay' — the Mafia have one of the most effective systems, they break people's knees).

I said that there's nothing new in this — it happened in the music business (and has happened in publishing too) with independent labels being swallowed by the likes of CBS, EMI and Decca. Eventually talent and/or originality is stiffled and the general public suffer until rebellious elements in the street put together an alternative music. It happened after the Beatles in the 60s and it happened again with Punk Rock in the 70s. It seems to be a cyclic event, and no doubt it will happen with the entertainment software business. There are too many talented games designers around for this industry to torment itself to death. All that's occurring at the moment is a change of colours. It's down to us as reviewers and players of games to ensure that the conglomerate software houses don't get complacent with their product.

Roger Kean

ON THE COVER GREMLIN

I'm afraid that once again it is CRASH apology time! The artwork gremlins have been at it again on the last issue, resulting in a shameful oddity in our On The Cover (Screen) feature about screen designer **David Thorpe**. We included a screen based on CRASH issue 1's cover that had nothing to do with David Thorpe. The man who designed the CRASH cover screen is actually **Graham Lucas**, who came second in the CRASH/Gremlin Graphics screen design competition some issues back. What's even worse, is that during the repro stage, the separations were reversed so the picture came out all the wrong colours. Oh dear. The mistake arose because Messrs Lucas and Thorpe's screen shots were all on the same roll of colour film and someone in the art dept got carried away with patriotic zeal. So, apologies to David Thorpe. Graham Lucas' picture was to be used on its own.

PROGRAMS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

MERELY MANGRAM

MERELY M

WELCOME to the computer games column that futures on just about everything. In fact I'm so fed up of writing the words 'Hopefully We'll Be Reviewing Next Month' that I've decided to abbreviate it down to HWBRNM, so if you see these letters — and you will — it isn't me trying to clear my throat of Ludlow's damp air (as I write, the rain is pouring down, another lovely summer).

Talking of the weather, chaos rains about me. My already cramped desk is yet again threatened by the sudden arrival of ZZAP! 64's editorial team, who have moved up from their base in Yeovil where the hell is Yeovil anyway?) and are busily grabbing all the spare power packs and 1922 Hermes typewriters going (and there aren't that many going, or is that 'working')? It's quite offputting, I can tell you, to be raving about some great new game, only to have some smart ●●●● going. 'Oh that one. Basically, we've already done that it on the 64, and it's not so amaaazing. . . .'

Yeah, well. . . .

Anyway, enough of the local colour — honour satisfied, once again I've managed to out-intro Robin Candy. *(seen the Playing Tips yet? -RC)* Onto the real stuff.

I guess the biggest sadness due to schedules an' that, is our not being able to review *Nodes of Yesod* by **Odin**. Odin aren't all that new, despite appearances, since they are a relaunched version of Thor (*Jack and the Beanstalk* et al). Previous Thor games were characterised by their extremely colourful graphics, and the same is true of *Nodes*, except that it also boasts some great graphics and neat humourous touches, as well as a vast playing area. Snap judgement here at CRASH Towers (some five reviewers fighting to get at the joystick) is that it could well be a rave CRASH Smash this issue — if it had arrived in time to get it all done properly.

You play (wait for this) the Right Hon Charlemagne 'Charlie' Fotheringham-Grunes (we'll stick to Right Charlie) and it takes place on the Moon — okay, forget the scenario, there's no room. A series of linked screens represent the Moon's surface (you know it's the Moon because of the excellent graphic of the Earth hanging in the twinkling starred sky) and Charlie runs leaps, bounds and somersaults (yes — somersaults) along, over the craters and hillocks. Jumping into a crater drops you below the surface, into caves with platform blocks suspended in space above the floor, which may be several screens down.

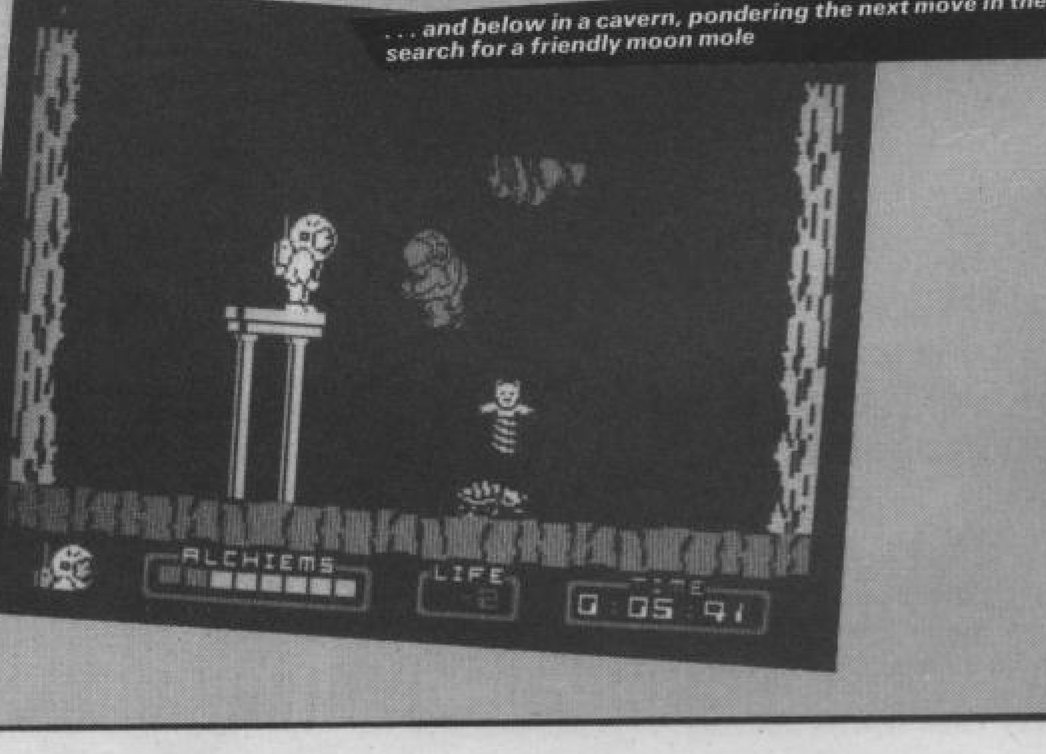


The excellent loading screen from Odin's NODES OF YESOD

Right Charlie doing a low-grav somersault on the moon's surface . . .



. . . and below in a cavern, pondering the next move in the search for a friendly moon mole



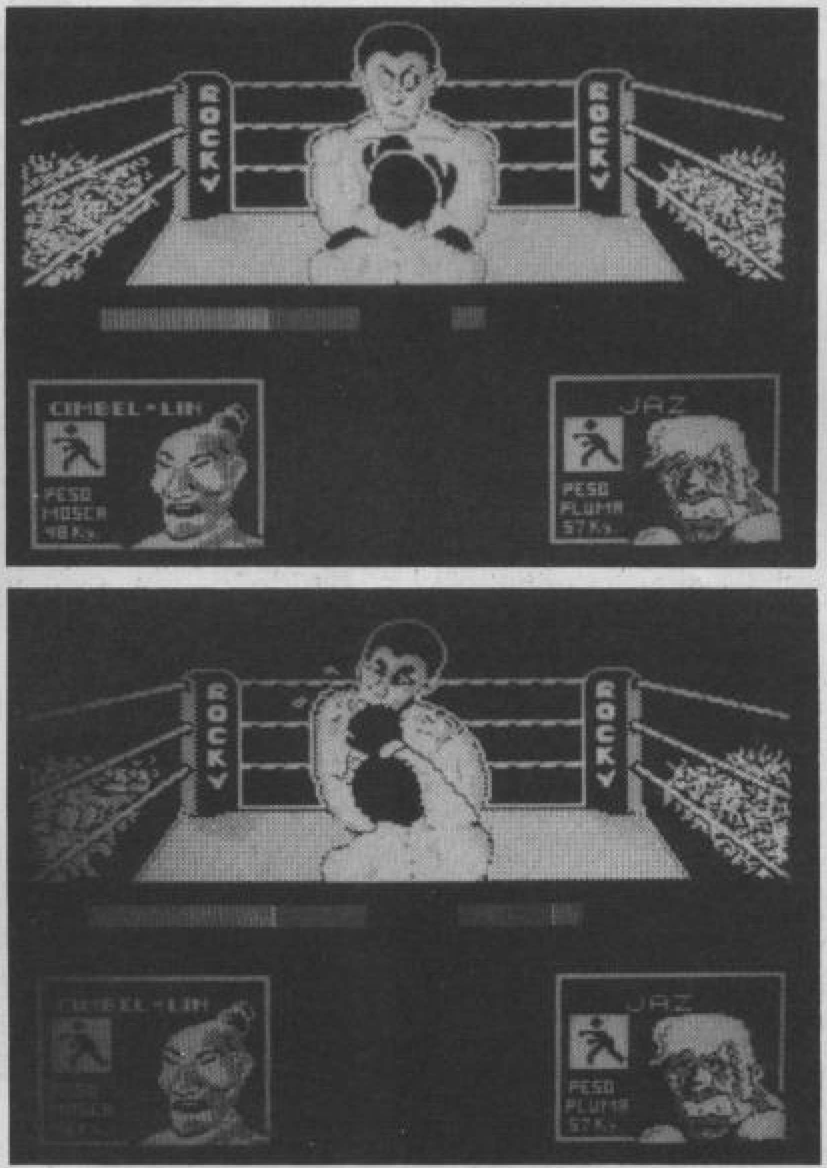
There are loads of very large, very varied and beautifully animated nasties. One of Charlie's prime objectives is to find and hopefully befriend a Moon Mole, a creature which it is suspected, eats the very substance of the Moon itself. This creature can be guided around, and thus makes a convenient sort of self-tunneling tube train for getting about the caverns.

We'll see what everyone has to say next month, but from my fairly quick glance, I'd say the character graphics are among the best I've seen — certainly the most detailed. Charlie, himself is a sheer delight with his determined walk, panicked falls, slumped resignation and terminally deflated end. Marvellous.

I've had reason in in the past (LM looks back — Christmas Special) to refer to what I call the 'self copy' trend, a syndrome whereby software houses all have the same sort of idea at the same time. The 'Track & Field' arcade game is a good example of this, resulting last year in a flood of athletic simulations. This year's themes seem to be a trifle more violent and related, ie boxing and karate (or martial arts).

Inspired by the arcade original 'Punch Out!!', we're about to see a battle in the ring between **Elite** and **Gremlin Graphics**. Elite are majoring on *Frank Bruno's Boxing* (see last issue Merely Mangram) which HWBRNM. Gremlin Graphics have just licenced *Rocky* from Spanish software house **Dinamic**. The name may be subject to a change if there should prove to be a clash of interests between the game and the famous film of the same name. *Rocky* has a neat control which when used via a joystick makes it feel quite realistic. Both games, as you can see, rely on very large graphics in black and white which allow for quite sophisticated animation — rather essential for a game like this.

On the oriental front we should soon be seeing a Spectrum version of *Way of the Exploding Fist* from **Melbourne House**. This karate simulation offers a wide range of tactics with eight types of kick such as the Jump Kick (ah so), High and Mid Kicks (ah so so), Short Jabs, Sweeps forwards and backwards (ah so so so) and the famous Roundhouse, which has little or nothing to do with Chalk Farm in London but does simulate a kind of high speed engine turntable effect for which the Chalk Farm Roundhouse was once famous. Good timing is essential with all of these tactics, something for which British Rail is not so famous. There are also three types of punch and two somersaults. *Way of the Exploding Fist* is a two-player game or one player against the computer, is expected to be available about now and costs £8.95.



The Spanish contender, ROCKY, offers somewhat larger characters. Here you are delivering a scorching right paw jab to the sweating oponent

The second contender is **System 3 Software** who brought us *Death Star Interceptor*, whose game *International Karate* should also be ready any day. Not many details yet on this one as I haven't seen a preview copy, but the large characters are animated against a black background and Mark Cale says there will be synthesised speech on the game, similar to that used on *DSI*. *International Karate* will cost somewhat less than the other ah so offerings at £5.99.

We should also expect to see something from **Imagine** along similar lines before long, a licenced version of the Kunami game *Kung Fu*, and (ah so) a version of *Karateka* from **US Gold**. Imagine look like releasing quite a few sporty type games in the near future, especially after the licence deal with Kunami. Among them, I'll put my money on Tennis, Golf, Rallying (*Hyper Rally*), and of course there's *Ping Pong*.

Just before going to press I heard about a new game from **Vortex**. Luke Andrews phoned up to give a few details. It's called *Highway Encounter*, written of course by **Costa Panayi**, and it features a high angle 3D view. There's been some time in between this release and the last, *Cyclone*, during which time Costa has been busily developing his style of 3D even further. Earth has been invaded by creatures from Outer Space and your task is to confront them at the end of the long highway where they are hiding. The highway is heavily patrolled by the aliens' guardians who have set all kinds of traps to prevent you getting to your destination. The player has five characters to control, but at the outset you are in control of one particular character. Should the one you control be killed, then you automatically take over control of one of the other four, but it is essential to protect the others because they can be killed — so they aren't acting as spare 'lives' in the usual sense. Luke's expecting to release *Highway Encounter* on 15 July and my incompetent informant (no names, but he's usually to be seen in company with a 1942 Morgan) forgot to check on the price before Luke rang off. HWBRNM! (that *was* me clearing my throat in sheer disgust — I can't stand incompetents).

PSS have caused quite a stir with their anti-wargame *Theatre Europe* on the 64. I've no news yet as to its release on the Spectrum. However, **Paul Hutchinson**'s follow up to *Xaviour*, *The Covenant* is due any day (See Forum for some graphics on the characters). PSS describe the game as an arcade adventure containing State of the Art graphics, in which you take the role of a futuristic Noah endeavouring to repopulate his devastated planet by collecting the last remaining members of individual species — a sort of ecology game. It costs £6.95 and HWBRNM.

2 screens showing the lively animation in FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING from Elite



ERELY MANGI

In their bid to take over the entire world, US Gold have announced the signing of a deal with **Walt Disney Productions** to create computer games based on forthcoming Walt Disney films, as well as a licence for existing American software. Certainly the first two games should be adaptions from Disney's two major releases this year, *Return to Oz*, follow up to the famous musical which starred Judy Garland, and *Black Cauldron*, an adventure movie due later in the year. These two, plus a game based on the characters in the *Jungle Book*, are being developed jointly by US Gold and Ocean. On top of that, there is the host of famous characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and that very British bear, Winnie the Pooh; the games resulting are: *Mickey's Space Adventure*, *Winnie the Pooh in Hundred Acre Wood* and *Donald Duck's Playground*. The games, which are marketed by Sierra-On-Line in the States, will be available on the 64 and I await news about the Spectrum conversions.

But this is not all, oh no, if you're aiming to take over the world, how could you possibly do it without Kermit and Gonzo? US Gold have also signed deals with **Muppet Productions** to produce two Muppet programs, *Kermit's Electronic Story Maker* — a graphics kit for very young kids, and *The Great Gonzo* — a word builder program for 6 years and up. Watch out Rosetta McCleod!

Backtracking slightly to Gremlin Graphics (well covered in this month's feature profile), I should just mention that along with *Rocky*, the company has also licenced a second game from Dinamic called *Profanation*, which features a lively character exploring the tombs of Abu Simbel (Egypt you know, *ref* Lloyd Mangram's World Atlas and General travelling Companion Guide). It has a graphical similarity to Quicksilva's *Fred*, but is in fact an extremely tough platform-cum-maze game that relies on the player's timing skills to avoid being ripped or dripped to death. WDBRNM (We'll Definitely Be Reviewing Next Month)

Silversoft have been rather quiet of late, but the London-based software house is getting ready to make some noise again. Like Gremlin Graphics, they have been interested in some of the games coming out of Spain's Dinamic. They are kicking off with the release of two related games, which incidentally precede *Profanation*. The first is called *Saimazoom*, which stars the intrepid Professor Indiana Smith who travels the exotic parts of the world digging, grubbing, discovering and generally getting into archaeological trouble. Part two, *Baba Liba* will follow when the Spanish/English translations are completed. *Saimazoom* costs £6.95 and *Baba Liba* will be £7.95.

Firebird are busy getting new material together for their Gold range — I don't know how much of this we'll see, but they tell us some 30 programs are in development and they're always interested in more, so if there are any programmers out there with some solid gold ideas (don't worry, the jokes get worse) get in touch with Firebird immediately. **John Cain**, who wrote the CRASH-smashed *Booty* is at work on a game in the Isle of Man due for release in September and which sounds like it's based on problems in the Isle of Man. Firebird weren't intending to release any more Silver range games until later in the year, but have come up with something called *Cylu*, which they thought was so mega-fab it was worth putting out straight away. A copy is dataposting its way to me at this very minute — more next month.

Software Projects promised us a preview of *Jet Set Willy II*, but it hasn't turned up yet. However the Amstrad version is supposed to be identical. It's set in exactly the same mansion as the last one, but by some magic method an extra 40 odd rooms have been added in and around the previous 64. There don't appear to be any big surprises in it except for the incorporation of all those hoaxes and jokses that *JSW* attracted to itself. The 64 version allows you to play in any room you wish to, but won't allow you to leave that room — an attempt to stop all the pokes from getting out of hand. Whether this is true on the Spectrum version I don't know yet. *Jet Set Willy II* has not been written by **Matthew Smith**.

I'm sure I must already have run out of space and if I take up too much RC starts complaining (and dash ed has already cut his section down slightly this month as a punishment for making a thingummy last month by leaving out a DATA line in a poke — tee hee), so I'd better get going on the old bike, back home. But one last interesting point I've just noticed; if you use Derek Brewster's adventure tips coding system and apply it to HWBRNM, you get IVAQMN. Fab, hey?

MERELY LM

HELI-CHOPPER

Producer: Firebird
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Tony Beckwith**

Apart from the flying ducks, the rising lethal bubbles, the murderous disks and the bombs there is little difference between your role in this game and that undertaken by those brave chaps of the Air-sea-rescue service. Your mission is simply to chunter around the screen in your little helichopper and rescue the clones stuck on the other side of the swamp. In the meantime the creatures in the swamp below are attacking you with a wide variety of weaponry, and while your chopper is armed, it can only destroy objects that are immediately below it.

The rescue of clones is effected by flying to one side of the swamp and waiting while he/she/it climbs on board, and then you deposit your passenger safely on the other side. A sort of *IF clone to be picked up THEN do so* operation.

While flying you must brave the objects buzzing around all of which are bent on your destruction. Subsequent screens offer the same terrain but with even more nasties to counter. Some of the screens have an aerial maze for you to negotiate, touching any of its component parts (the third screen's maze is made up of what appear to be bricks with eyes) will result in the destruction of your flying machine.

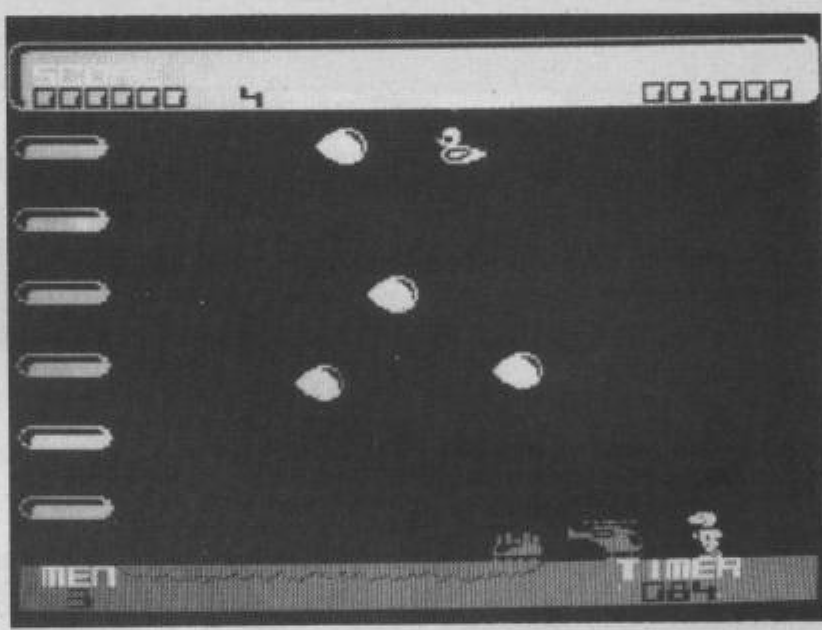
Points are awarded for shooting the aerial greeblies, the number of points will, oddly enough, depend on their colour. Points are not awarded for transporting the clones but you will have to move them all before you are allowed to go to the next screen.

CRITICISM

● 'When I first played *Helichopper* I thought it was Firebird flop but now, about two hours later, I just can't put it down. The graphics are small neat and well animated, they remind me of some of Ultimate's early games. There is hardly any sound but what little there is, is adequate. I think the time limit was a little too long on some screens because they where a little too easy to complete. One feature that really annoyed me was the key define option, if you weren't quick enough then you could end up with all of the controls on one side. While *Helichopper* was a very playable game it wasn't as addictive as I had hoped.'

● *'Helichopper' part of Firebird's Silver Range, is pretty good value at £2.99. The graphics are smooth, and the game is at first fun to play, but it become less exciting the more you play it because of its limitations and repetitive nature. 'Cheap and cheerful', better than average and for the money not a bad deal.'*

● 'Apart from a fatal misunderstanding when I first started playing the game, which led to me parking the helicopter on top of the electric fence (which meant that the little clones wouldn't come out to play and I couldn't do anything), I soon got to grips with *Helichopper* which is really quite jolly. Your helicopter whizzes round quite merrily, bouncing off the top of the sky, and the various nasties which include homing killer ducks make it quite a challenge to play. Once I'd stopped bouncing the helicopter in frustration on the head of unco-operative clones, and worked out that you had to land by the electric fence and wait for it to disappear before collecting a clone, I was well away. Hours of fun. . . .'



Walking to the helicopter in HELICHOPPER, while above, circles an evil duck

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: simple but clear
Graphics: average
Sound: fair
Skill levels: 5
Lives: 4
Screens: 23
General rating: pretty average game

Use of computer	65%
Graphics	71%
Playability	75%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**67%**

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

Producer: CRL
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**

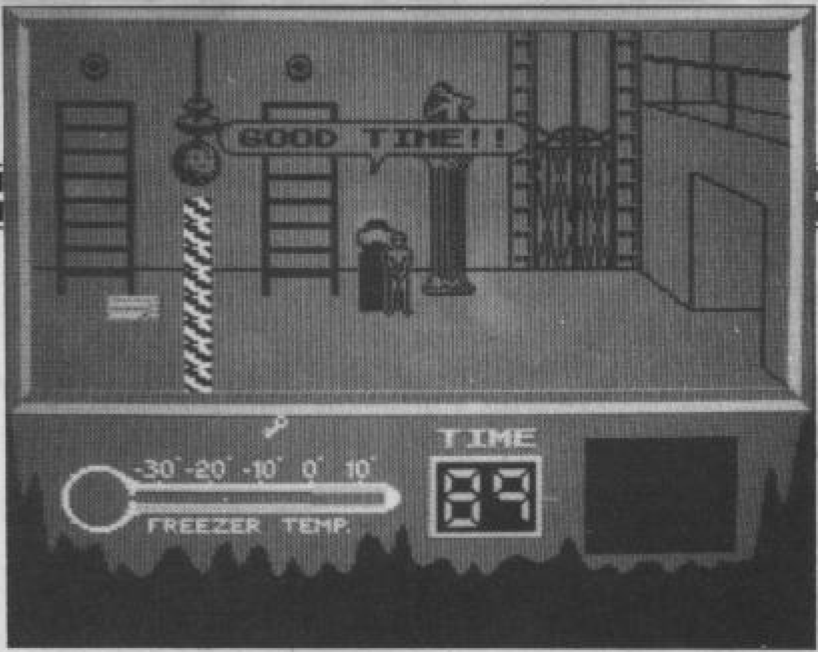
'The Rocky Horror Show' was a cult stage play and an even bigger cult film in the States, where night after night for years, the same audience would sit in the theatre repeating the lines in unison with the actors, dressed in the same type of clothing — crazy. It was a crazy film, and the game actually does go a long way in recreating the atmosphere and sense of madness, which is to its credit.

If you are one of the last people left on earth who knows nothing of the 'Rocky Horror Show', film or stage play, then you might be forgiven for not knowing what is going on. Good, middle class American youngsters, Janet and Brad, through some mechanical defect in their car, end up in this weird house for the night and one of them gets turned to stone — well, it'll do for a start.

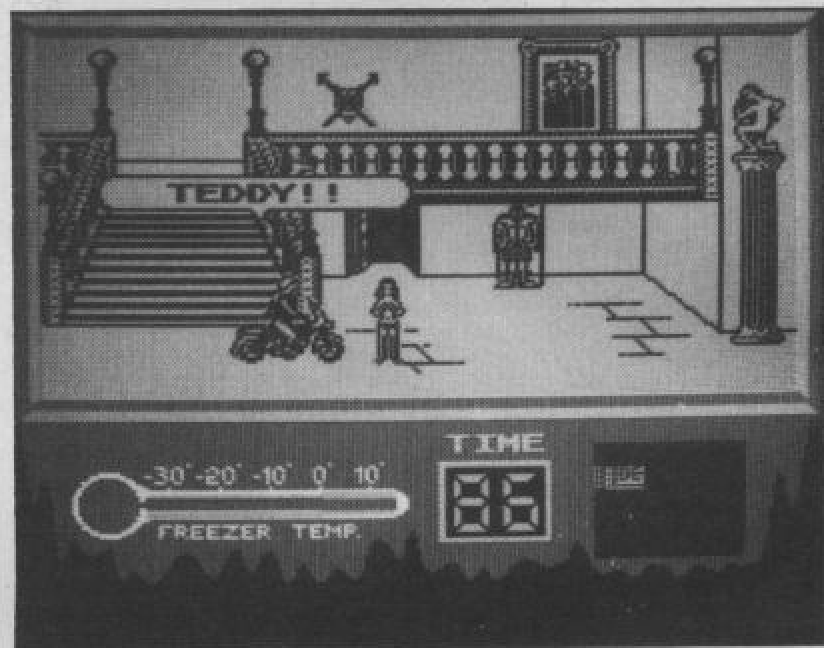
It's entirely up to you whether it's Brad or Janet who gets stoned by the wicked Dr Frank'n'Furter and his dreaded Medusa machine, but clearly the least solid of the pair must do the rescuing. The task ahead is simple; guide the rescuer around the house and find the pieces of the De-Medusa and put it back together, then you can wipe that rather stoney smile from your partner's face and run like blazes. Of course finding the pieces isn't a piece of rock cake, you need to look for them and that means opening doors and that means finding keys — the right keys. And while you are lurching around this rather attractive period dwelling you are going to be chased by quite a few people who would rather you didn't, and they have some pretty mean ways of expressing their preferences, like killing you. If you are lucky something might just walk up to you and say something silly like 'I didn't like my Teddy!' or 'it's just a jump to the left....' These remarks seem move Brad and Janet into a state of total confusion (know how they feel) and after a few more from the right sort of person that confusion moves up a grade, to total death.

The De-Medusa is made up of fifteen separate bits which must be collected piece by piece and deposited in the chamber next to your stiff friend. At the start of each game you find that the characters and the vital pieces have all been left in random locations around the house. While there are fewer than fifteen rooms within the house, some rooms have more than a mere lock to get past, the worst being a strange electric beam. The beam removes your one and only life if you get too close — it can be turned off but it's a bit tricky. Your other problems move around on their own, they are the characters of the play and each one of them will have a lasting effect on you. The Butler (Riff Raff), for example, is nuts, he wanders round all day long complaining that nobody loves him while at the same time he is trying to zap you. One of the girls, Columbia, simply strips you naked when you bump into her. Eddie is a chap/thing who is particularly unpleasant. He was one of Frank's failed experiments. Fortunately he spends most of his time in the freezer, unfortunately the freezer doesn't work that well, the thermometer at the base of the screen lets you know when he is thawing out.

Oh one last point, the whole house is a space ship, yes it is difficult to believe but there you are. From your arrival you have 99 time periods (that's not as long as it sounds) to rescue your mate and a run for it otherwise by then, you see, Frank will have grown tired of your feeble efforts and left for home. Apparently Frank is this guy from outer space and he wears the wrong clothes, well that seems to explain it all.



It isn't easy having a good time — in the gym with Frankie



Eddie (played by Meat Loaf in the movie) burns a path through the hall on his bike, searching for Teddy

CRITICISM

● 'On the whole this is a very appealing game to play, the backdrop of the house is great, the animation is superb, I particularly admired the manner in which the characters moved around of their own free will, and around objects. The way the screen changes from one room to the next is very smart. But something has come out of all of this cleverness, bugs, I'm sure of it. On two occasions when I died and sent Janet back she appeared at the starting position, the hall, but in the hall was the lift from the other end of the house and one of the electric beams from the floor above. Well being the adventurous sort I got in the lift, guess what? it went DOWN to the floor on which I got in it. Other annoying things tended to happen. The motorcyclist could be seen momentarily as part of the front door, he would appear again, just for a flash, in the dining room. This business about the clothes I thought one of the characters was meant to steal them yet you can be quite happily wandering across a room and woomph — you're stark staring naked. The electric beams are tricky yes, but more often than not you can get killed when they are not on and that makes it a lot more than just tricky. Very nice game shame about the bugs.'

● *'Unfortunately due to my not being able to receive channel 4 I missed the 'Rocky Horror Show'. I assume that the game follows the same theme but in any case it's a good game. CRL have used some nice graphics. I found the collecting of bits a little repetitive after a while. The hero sprites went into some weird dance routines on occasions. I regret not being able to understand the point of the whacky conversations but even so a playable game but not that addictive.'*

● 'It's about time CRL produced some decent software, especially now they've gone public, well maybe *The Rocky Horror Show* is a new leaf. The idea of the game (getting the De-Medusa machine parts and putting them all together) is quite simple really, although a little long-winded. Some puzzles are a little tricky to solve at first but become apparent enough as you progress through the game. The graphics are of high quality, detailed and there are no attribute clashes between the moving characters and the backgrounds. It looks as though lots of people are starting to copy Gargoyle's *Tir Na Nog* style. After playing the first few games, I noticed that there is no score — a little bit off-putting because you don't know how far you have got through the game. Overall quite a playable game and definitely the best CRL have produced, and hopefully not the last. I don't think it will take too long to solve once you've got going.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: A/Z up/down, N/M left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair and Protek
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: a bit one tone but avoids clashes
Graphics: very effective, despite some oddities
Sound: pleasant effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
Screens: about 14
General rating: an exciting and different game with adventure elements.

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	85%
Playability	78%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	70%
Value for money	70%
Overall	**79%**

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TALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Producer: Interceptor Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **I Gray and others**

This game first appeared sometime before Christmas on the Commodore 64 and generally received favourable reviews.

Don't be deceived into thinking that Sultan Saladin is some form of cold and healthy crinkly green meal served with dried fruit. He is in fact a very unsavoury character from the *Tales of the Arabian Nights* who practised the same nasty habits as the black widow spider only with the roles reversed — asa result, the Sultan's brides last a short time! Prince Imrahil's sister has been seized by the Sultan and is taken to Bagdad. It's up to you to help him rescue the girl.

The journey to Bagdad begins aboard one of the Sultan's ships where you must collect, in order, the golden jugs each bearing one of the letters in the word A-R-A-B-I-A-N. As you scamper about the rigging a multitude of nasty monsters from above and below the water attack you.

From the ship it's up river by raft to a great cavern where you encounter Al-Khemized and his dreadful genies. While you're in the cavern perhaps you could just have a quick jog round and put the jugs in order then you can move on; to the desert. The desert scene, like the river, is to be noted for its lack of jugs, it's just you against the nasties. Next stop, the city gates, but mind out for the arrows and boulders as you sort out those jugs. Among the platforms of the next scene, the garden, you find some more golden jugs and this time the arrows are small fry compared to the nastie genies. At last the Palace; more golden jugs but don't forget to duck and weave as you sort them out. After the Palace you pick up Anitra and with her in tow you're only a magic carpet's flight from home, just mind out for the arrows and those nasty birds.

CRITICISM

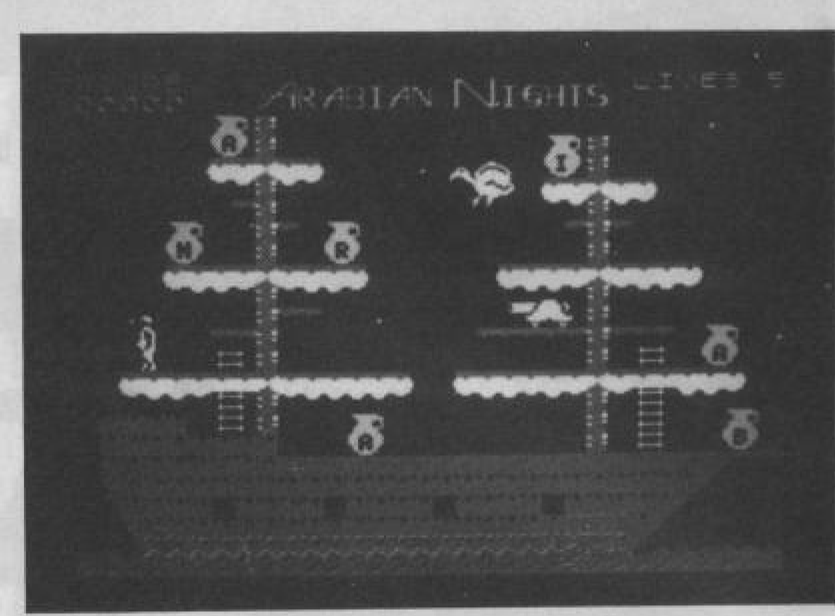
● 'After admiring the rather 'flash' cassette case I was really looking forward to taking on *The Tales of The Arabian Nights*, but when I started wow was I bored! One of the first things I realised on the ship scene was that once at the top of a mast you could not go down, the instructions gave no indication of this. The graphics are reasonable and after you have passed the first screen the game develops a little. The sound could have been a great deal better, a few measly bleeps as you collect a jug but at least one is given the option to switch the sound off. This appears to present the game as good value for £5.50 but I'm not so sure.'

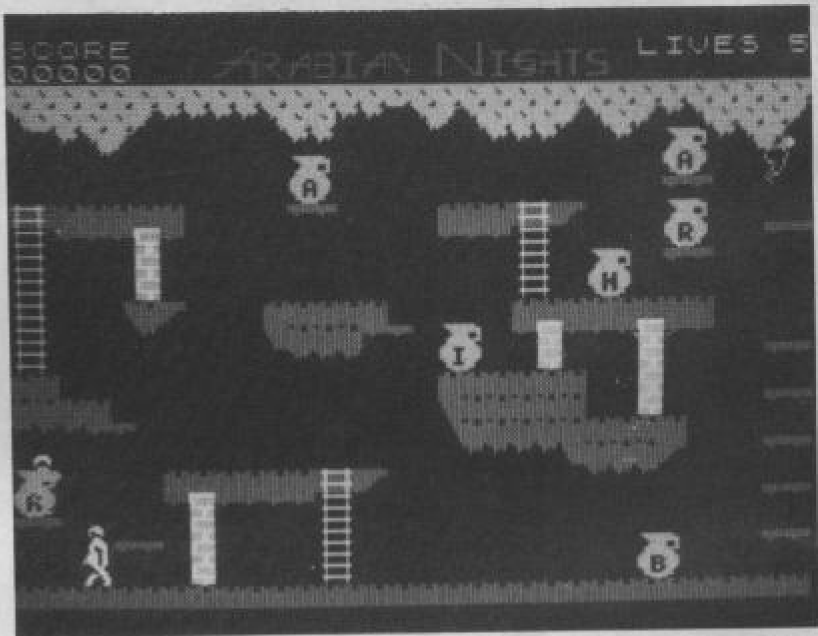
● *'Not the world's most challenging arcade game this, in fact if you you can spell Arabian you should have no trouble rescuing Anitra and then she can sort out the wretched jugs.'*

● '*Arabian Nights* has to be one of the most bug-ridden games I have ever played. It has a demo mode that doesn't go away, I had to break into it to actually play the game, and once you do get into it you really have to try hard to avoid the bugs. I only saw the first screen because avoiding one of the nasties means you have to walk off the edge of the ship and then you fall into the sea and disappear under the waves only to reappear at the top of the screen falling back into the sea. This continues to loop infinitely until you pull the plug as there isn't a abort option. This game has hardly any sound and fairly jerky graphics that are painful on the eyes.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, N/M left/right, SS to jump
Joystick: Kempston or Protek
Keyboard play: narrow selection of keys but otherwise OK
Use of colour: pretty good
Graphics: above average
Sound: great when you turn it off
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5

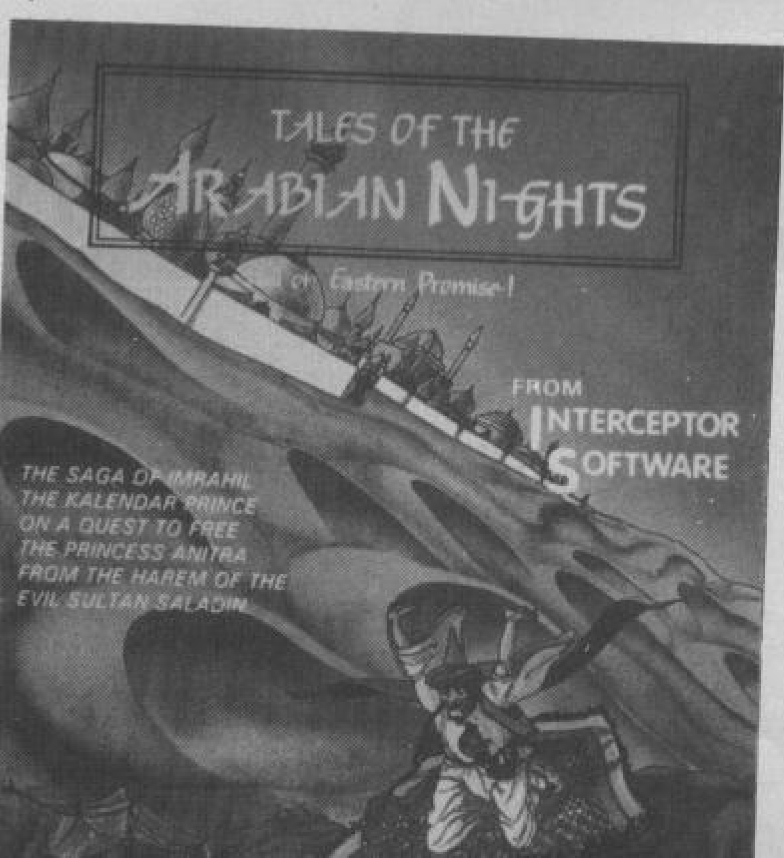




Sorting jugs seems to be a perennial task in ARABIAN NIGHTS

Screens: 8
General rating: slightly better than average.

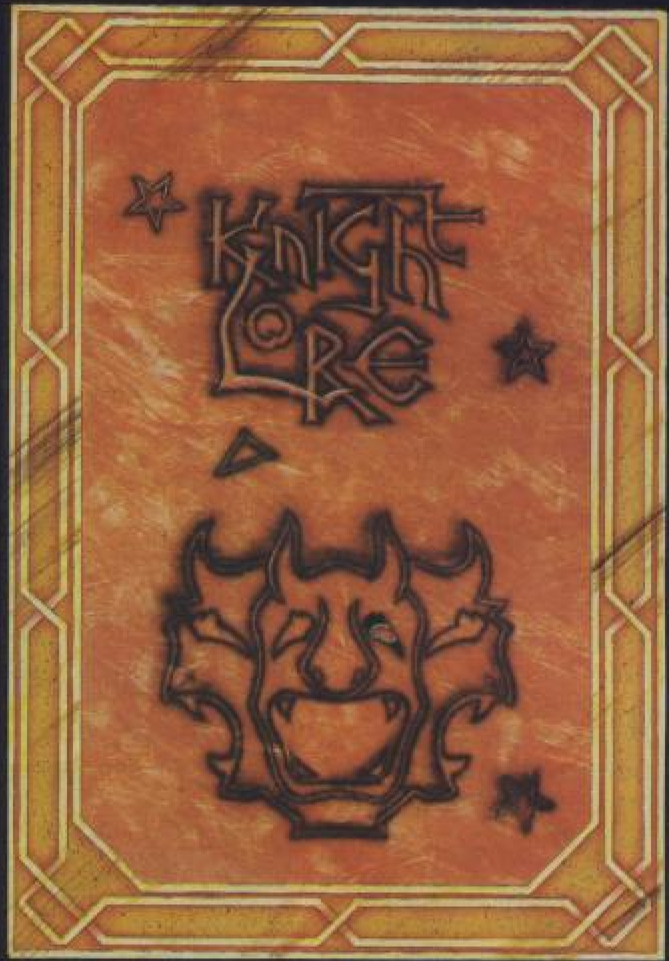
Use of computer:	51%
Graphics	55%
Playability	46%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	43%
Value for money	55%
Overall	**55%**

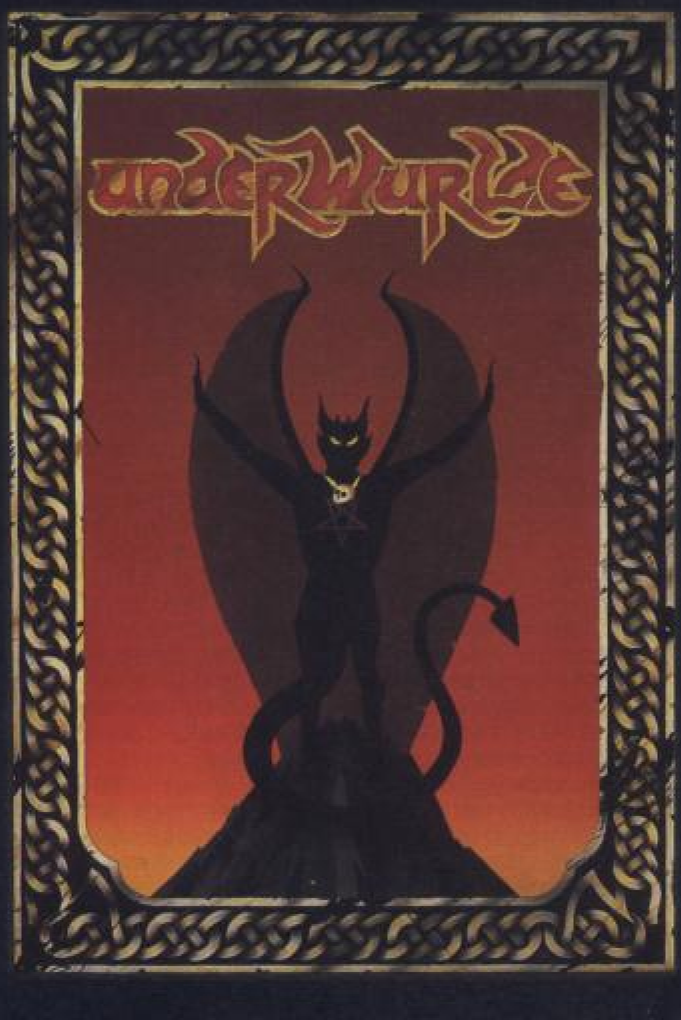


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A CRASH Smash

D·U·N D·A·R·A·C·H





DUN DARACH

Producer: Gargoyle Games
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Authors: **Greg Follis and Roy Carter**

The hero is back! We were first introduced to the 7-characters high Cuchulainn the great in *Tir Na Nog*, now he returns in this epic game, *Dun Darach*. This time there is a very subtle difference between Cuchulainn as seen in *Tir Na Nog* and Cuchulainn in *Dun Darach*, he is alive! No he hasn't been reincarnated for reuniting the Seal Of Calum, this adventure is set in the early years before *Tir Na Nog*.

Following a bloody and pointless battle against the Conachta. In which the Amhair, a prince of the Conachta, had been killed. Cuchulainn the Great was returning home with his faithful charioteer, Loeg.

Towards the end of the second day they stopped at a wayside inn, leaving the chariot beside a strange horse drawn carriage. While they waited for food they were approached by Skar, a strikingly beautiful girl. She told them that she was the owner of the strange chariot and that she required assistance to mend a broken axle. Loeg, unsurprisingly, leapt to assist her and left the inn with Skar.

After a while Cuchulainn ventured outside, but to his astonishment there was no sign of either Loeg or Skar. Instead one of the proud horses that pulled the chariot lay slain. Of the Oak carriage, there was only a cloud of disappearing dust and on the wind a hint of ghostly girlish laughter.

Skar was, it seemed, a Sorceress and ally of the Connachtmen, and she had seized Loeg in retribution for the Princeling's death, and had taken him, body and soul, to the secret city of *Dun Darach*. . . .

So the scene is set and you as Cuchulainn must seek out the whereabouts and rescue Loeg from Skar. On the way to achieving this you must complete several sub quests such as finding a particular gift for someone in return for another object which will prove useful in your quest.

The city of *Dun Darach* is split into several parts which all have their own characteristics, the pleasure area has gambling houses and the finance area has banks. Within each area the streets all have their own names and all the doors are numbered, which makes mapping and navigation easier. Doors can be entered by standing in front of them and pressing enter, the scene then cuts to the interior of the room. The reverse is true should you wish to exit a room.

The main difference between *Tir Na Nog* and *Dun Darach* is interaction. In *Tir Na Nog* you rarely needed to interact with the other characters, but interaction plays an important part in *Dun Darach*. There are two basic forms of interaction — trading with shopkeepers and brokers, and trying to prize bits of information out of the main characters.

Trading with shopkeepers is very simple. On entering a shop a message is displayed at the top of the screen which tells you what goods the shopkeeper sells or buys and at what price. If you are buying something then you pick up the object and offer the shopkeeper money. If you have enough money then the shopkeeper says 'thank you' and the goods are yours. If, on the other hand, you don't have enough money you can always try stealing the goods. This is done by picking up the object and walking out of the shop with it. Some of the more expensive goods, like the thieves' licence cannot be stolen and if you try to steal them the door locks until you have either paid for the goods or put them back.

Sometimes you are in the position where you have some goods which another shopkeeper wishes to purchase. Just offer the shopkeeper the goods and he will give you money in return. Of course instead of buying and selling at a profit you could always steal some goods and sell them to another shopkeeper for huge profit. Should Ryde, a sort of local bobby, catch you in possession of some stolen goods then all your money, unless you have banked some of it, and all the possessions you are carrying will be taken.

Communicating with the characters that roam the streets is slightly harder. First of all you must find out what each character wants, which sends you on a





sub-quest to find the object. Once found you you can offer the object to a character who may give you something in return. While walking the streets you must beware of the local pick-pockets who will gladly take your money and many of your goods should you happen to bump into them, unless you are a member of the Thieves Guild of course. All together there are ten main characters to interact with and you must get to know each one's personal likes and dislikes.

As well as the shops and the brokers there are several other different types of room. There are the bankers, deposit rooms, portals, gambling houses, magic rooms and galleries. The bank is a good honest way of making money at a steady rate. The minimum deposit is 1000 iridi (the local currency) and the interest rate is 1% per day. The days are calculated by the torches that appear on the walls, night when they are on and day when off. This only applies when outside a building, inside the torches are permanently on. While your money is in the bank it is safe from all the other characters.

Deposit rooms are, as the name suggests, rooms where you can deposit goods, for a fee of course. You just enter the room and drop the object on the table and a fee is deducted as you leave.

In *Tir Na Nog* there were a set of rooms which would transport you to other parts of the land. The same principle has been implemented in *Dun Darach* except on most of the portals you have to pay a fee. This is a quick and easy way to travel about the city should you be in hurry.

Gambling houses are a quick and easy way of making money or losing it! On one of the walls is a set of two dice. These spin around and after a while stop to show two numbers. The game is played by placing a bet on either the A or B table. Each table has its own numbers and odds and if the sum of the dice adds up to a number on one of the tables you have either won or lost. This in itself provides an enjoyable alternative to all the walking about and trading.

Magic rooms tend to give you messages which are clues if you buy spells from there. Also scattered throughout the city are rooms which are called Hail- followed by another name. If you take a shield with the same name and place it on the table in the room then a picture in the room changes to another symbol which gives you a clue.

The galleries contain pictures of objects or just pictures of things connected with objects. If you have got one of the objects connected with a picture then drop it on the nearby table and a tick will appear on the picture. Here the Gargoyle sense of humour is best displayed, as it was in *Tir Na Nog* — remember the N and egg (the connection being N's lay eggs), this makes working out some of the clues very hard, but if all else fails you could always try trial and error. On completing a gallery you are given a new object or a clue about how to do something else.

The screen is a bit smaller than that used in *Tir Na Nog* but none of the detail has been lost, the upper and lower parts being used to display messages and objects carried etc. The same 'camera view' technique that was used in *Tir Na Nog* has been used in *Dun Darach* which means it is possible to get views of both sides of a street, this can also help you avoid other characters such as the pick-pockets. Cuchulainn is positioned in the centre of the screen and the streets scroll smoothly as he walks. The other main characters as represented by one basic male and female character. When a character besides Cuchulainn is on screen (except shopkeepers and brokers) then their name is displayed at the bottom of the screen and a coloured square follows them with their initial in it. This means characters can easily be identified especially when there are several on screen.

As you can see *Dun Darach* relies heavily on interaction with other characters and finance. Don't let this fool you into thinking that all the types of problems experienced in *Tir Na Nog* have vanished, you still have to work out various puzzles. *Dun Darach* should prove tricky to solve for a couple of months because the game is so complex. It comes supplied in a lavish box complete with a detailed booklet and a rough map of the city.

CRITICISM

● 'Oh no! Please not again! I've only just completed *Tir Na Nog* and I thought I deserved a well earned rest. But alas I have been forced to roam the streets of *Dun Darach* and try to work out all the nasty problems that Greg Follis has thought up for us, which will no doubt mean more sleepless nights. I don't think I can stand it any longer! The graphics are as good as those in *Tir Na Nog*, if not better, and the animation leaves nothing to be desired. Fortunately there are no nasty horrible Sidhe to contend with just characters the same size as Cuchulainn which, fortunately, don't kill you. I didn't think it was really possible to improve on *Tir Na Nog* but somehow Gargoyle have pulled it off. Colour is used well with no attribute problems, even when characters walk across each other. Overall a superb game that should keep you glued to your TV sets throughout the summer (and autumn, winter and spring). Definitely a strong contender for game of the year!'

● *'Cuchulainn the Great is off on his travels again in this epic game from Gargoyle Games. I was amazed by the sheer quality of the graphics which are amongst the best I have ever*



D·U·N D·A·R·A·C·H



seen! The animation is fantastic and now that there are more characters in the game it means it is one of the best looking games around. The game is a bit hard to get into but once you start getting somewhere you will love it. I found the game totally addictive and utterly playable. Overall a truly fantastic game that deserves to be a huge hit in fact I'm pretty sure that it will be a hit!'

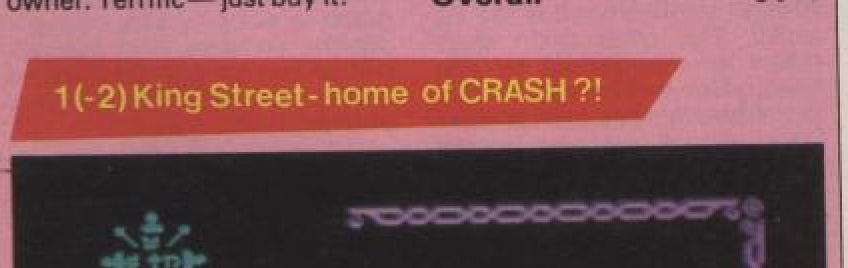
● 'The long awaited sequel to *Tir Na Nog* has at last arrived and it was certainly worth the wait. It must have been hard to surpass the graphics in *Tir Na Nog* but Gargoyle have done it, just look at the other characters, the rats and the torches and you will see what I mean. Sound isn't up to much just the odd spot effect but you tend to get so engrossed in the game itself that you don't care what the sound is like. As with *Tir Na Nog* there are no attribute problems which is surprising because there are more than one colour is being used on screen at a time. The adventure element is a bit tough to get into but you can always go gambling or just stealing goods and selling them at a huge profit, a bit risky but worth it. The save game facility is one of the best I have ever used and it is very quick and reliable. How Gargoyle packed so much into 48K I will never know, there is just so much going on that it is unbelievable. If you liked *Tir Na Nog* (or even if you didn't) you will love *Dun Darach*. Excellent value for money and a must for any respectable Spectrum owner. Terrific — just buy it!'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Left/Right alternate keys from Z to Symbol shift, change camera view A to L, enter a door ENTER, pick up/drop alternate keys on the third row Q to P, select object 23789, offer object the four corner keys
Joystick: only programmable
Keyboard play: quite a few keys but easy to use and responsive
Use of colour: excellent, no attribute problems
Graphics: unbelievable animation and stunning backgrounds
Sound: limited spot effects
Lives: Just the one, but you can't die, you can only be robbed and taken in by confidence tricks
Screens: scrolling streets plus over 100 rooms and doors
General rating: an excellent value for money game which has a lot of scope coupled with brilliant scenario and graphics. Truly a megagame.

Use of computer:	85%
Graphics	96%
Playability	89%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	97%
Value for money	94%
Overall	97%

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A view of game and movie...

A VIEW TO A KILL

Producer: Domark
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£10.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Softstone Ltd.**

Surprisingly, this is the first game to be based on Ian Fleming's superhero James Bond. Taking the form of a three-part arcade adventure, **A View to a Kill** is based on the three main action sequences of the film of the same name which is due for release any day now.

The basic plot of both the film and game is quite straightforward, involving Bond in a battle with a superbaddy who has delusions of grandeur and seeks world domination. This time, the evil one is called Max Zorin and plans to blow up Silicon Valley with a thermonuclear device so that he can corner the silicon chip market and put every other computer company out of business. *(Who needs Max — Mark Butler, Chris Curry, Paul Dyer et al.)*

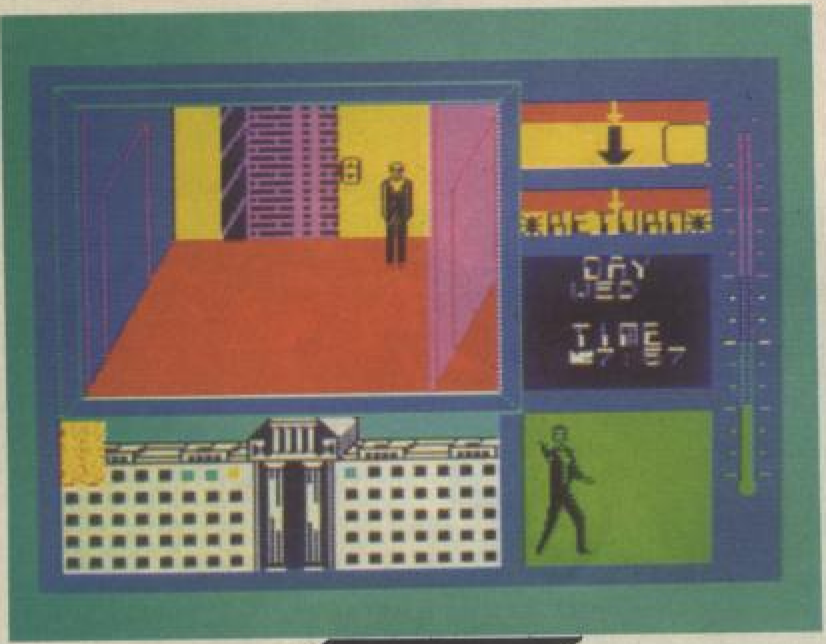
You have to guide 007 through the three games, acquiring a special code on successful completion of each task which you input to start the next game in the trilogy. This code contains information about your performance in the game just completed, and while you can use the same code to jump to any particular game, the best way to improve your performance is to play each game until you have done really well, before moving on to the next section. To complete the final game, you must have done as well as James himself would have in the first two scenarios, so unless you're really secret agent material a little practice will be in order!

The game is played in real time but you are allowed to pause, so you can sit back and sip your Martini. A choice of background music is offered: you can select the Bond theme or the tune from the Duran Duran single. More sound effects are provided in the form of speech output, phrases such as 'my name is James Bond' and 'Dammit' make occasional appearances.

Not quite icon driven, the adventure elements of the games



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007

are controlled via a 'duck shoot' system which is displayed in a window on the right of the screen. The upper part of this window shows the symbols for the items that you have in your possession, and by using the keys or joystick they can be made to scroll past a pointer to make a choice. Once an item has been selected it can be used according to the instructions entered in the lower part of the window. This lower area contains phrases such as 'return', 'search', 'drop', 'use' and 'give'. The command you select in the lower section will act upon the object you selected in the section above.

Part One of the game is set in Paris. Bond has been briefed by 'M' and is having lunch with a fellow agent, when suddenly his colleague is killed by the ruthless assassin, May Day. Bond chases her to the top of the Eiffel Tower and watches in amazement as she leaps off the top, parachuting down to safety. Commandeering a taxi at the foot of the tower, Bond attempts to guide it through the streets of Paris to the spot where May Day will land.

Using the controls, you have to guide the taxi to May Day's landing spot. The main screen provides of 3D view of the road ahead, while the lower part displays a map of the immediate area. You have a radio tracker which gives an indication of May Day's position. Driving round the Paris streets you encounter many hazards, and driving the wrong way down one-way streets will have the police on your tail, setting up road blocks or maybe taking a few pot shots. And watch out for the manic Parisian drivers - too many collisions and your car will stop working.

Miss May Day's landing, and it's back to the start for you. . . .

San Francisco provides the setting for Section Two, the City Hall to be exact. Bond and his girl, Stacey, have found Max but he has turned the tables on them by trapping them in the lift and, because he's a nice sort of guy, setting fire to it. Bond has escaped from the lift but now you must guide him. He must rescue Stacey and escape from the burning building.

Not all of the objects found inside city hall will have any immediate use, the geiger counter, for example, is needed for the next game. As you move from room to room the fire is taking hold, and time is of the essence. Your progress and that of the fire is shown on a front elevation of City Hall displayed at the base of the screen. A thermometer on the right of the screen lets you know when things are getting too hot.

If you managed to get past the first two games then you are given the chance to save Silicon Valley and next year's Spectrum production. To complete this section of the trilogy Bond must enlist May Day to help him get to the nuclear device by convincing her of the error of her ways. The geiger counter shown at the top right of the screen will help you locate the bomb and while there's a great deal of jumping and rope climbing to do, you must always be on the look out for useful objects.

The mine is really a huge maze, and you can examine the area immediately around Bond, so avoiding those spectacular but annoying jumps into oblivion. When you locate the bomb you must disable it. Then you and May Day can make off into the sunset, safe in the knowledge that Max has had his chips and the world is once more a safe and happy place.

CRITICISM

● 'This is a huge game with many interrelated elements that make it extremely playable. Some of the graphics are a bit of a let down — I'm sure they could have been a lot better. The sound? well a great deal has been promised and if it is only half as good as the CBM version then they have done well. The speech is OK but perhaps a little feeble, the effect is very similar to the speech on *Deathstar Interceptor*. The facility to play any of the games in isolation is useful but I feel that once the problems have been learnt and tackled a few times the game will lose a great deal of its attraction. On the whole though I think it fair to say that for any Bond fans this game is a must — especially if you intend to see the film because that should help it all make sense, and provide you with some valuable clues to solving the game.'

● *'If you've seen* Impossible Mission *on the Commodore, and hoped for an equally good Spectrum secret agent game you would be sadly disappointed by* A View to a Kill. *The graphics leave a general impression of being crude, and the games themselves weren't exactly gripping. Perhaps if you see the film first in Glorious Living Technicolour Cinemascope or whatever, your imagination will make up for the shortcomings. Between them, the three games make up a reasonable entertainment package, but somehow I don't think I'd be totally gripped for very long.'*

● 'This is the first arcade game about Ian Fleming's super (unkillable) character James Bond, Agent 007. I was quite surprised when I found out that this was the only one on the market as software houses seem to be buying up heroes like hot cakes. I loved the opening sequence — it was a very good effect although it did go on for ages. The games themselves were playable and addictive, with fair to good graphics. There is some nice speech in there too, but other than that the sound was a bit uneventful. I like the way you can select your weapons, hardware etc, although it can lead to some problems in the mine when jumping. I wish 007 would show some sign of injury, his resilience became a bit annoying after a while. For instance when in the mine after falling the equivalent of 100 feet and landing on his head he would lie flat on his back for half a second and then get up and walk off as if he had just tripped up. Still, a fun game overall, and not a bad tie-in

COMMENTS

Control keys: vary from game to game, displayed on each title screen along with options
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: average
Graphics: average, better in the mine
Sound: occasional bit of chat
Skill levels: 1
Lives: infinite
Screens: three linked games
General rating: certainly worth having

Use of computer	**73%**
Graphics	**67%**
Playability	**75%**
Getting started	**84%**
Addictive qualities	**69%**
Value for money	**65%**
Overall	**76%**

Louder than the game...



Keith Hamshere

ARCHON

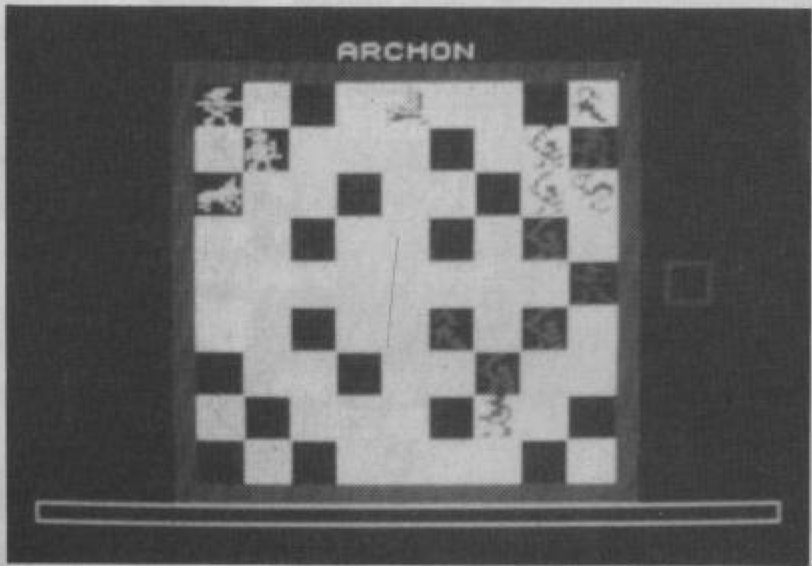
Producer: Ariolasoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£10.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Paul Reiche III and Anne Westfall**

Archon is a strategy game requiring quite a high degree of arcade skill. The main playing area looks remarkably like a chess board until you notice that while some of the squares are either black or white others are in tones of grey, and changing. As with chess you have two opposing forces facing each other but unlike chess the forces are not matched. Each of the two armies have different pieces, each having individual strengths and weaknesses

Before the game begins you must decide between playing for the good guys or for the powers of evil — naturally a sportsman would select the former. The game can be played either against the computer or against another player but in any event to be successful you must learn to appreciate the individual powers of each of your pieces. Each side has different characters, or icons, but overall they are matched. As with chess some icons are able to move ahead only two or three squares while others may be able pass over other icons or even, with the aid of a spell, teleport to any location on the board.

To move you simply manipulate a cursor square over a piece, press fire, then move the square to the position you desire. If the move is over a distance greater than is allowed, or is illegal for some reason, perhaps because it is blocked by other pieces or has been imprisoned by your enemy, then the computer will tell you. When playing the computer it moves its pieces in exactly the same way, so it's easy to follow its moves.

The object of the game is to take and hold the five 'power' points but to do that you must destroy the enemy forces and this takes a great deal of shrewd planning. Apart from having to know the strengths and weaknesses of each of the pieces and remembering how best to use them, it's good to take advantage of situations unique to this game. For example perhaps you have just lost a major piece and in doing so have severely wounded the opposing icon, are you in a position to send in a minor icon and finish the job before the enemy has a chance to heal its wounds? When you are ready to attack all that is required is to move your icon over to the occupied square then the computer will ask if you want to challenge the occupant. A positive response causes the main display to change for the battle screen.



The powers of light and dark prepare for war
The Phoenix prepares for battle

The battle screen has a life strength indicator for each of the icons in combat, a first time player may be horrified to notice the life bar of his opponent's icon is three times greater than his own. At the start of battle the two icons are positioned on opposite sides. At various and constantly changing locations around the screen blocks are located, these act as barriers for either side to cower behind. The two icons must fight it out to the death and the winner will, of course, win the square for which they are fighting. Depending on the nature of the icons involved, the mode of attack will vary, for some are able to fire bolts and can cause damage at a distance while others must make contact to strike a blow. The meat of the game, however, is making sure that your icon is able to defeat the enemy and this is where strategy comes in. Try not to take on an opponent that has greater strength. While some icons are able to move at great speed they may only be able to fire at close range, others move very slowly but a direct hit from one of these could kill you. Other icons may possess speed and strength but require long intervals before they can fire again. The minor icons enter the battlefield with very little strength, but with luck and nifty play perhaps you may inflict a lethal blow.

To make the strategic element of the game even more complicated the program introduces concepts such as 'luminosity cycles' and 'power points'. If you decide to attack an icon on a power point then that icon will be much stronger than normal as well as being protected from the effects of magic. The luminosity cycle dictates that while icons on squares of their own colour are stronger (dark on black etc) some of the squares will change in colour. The effects of the magic applied by the magicians make for greater complexity, the spells can only be used once and their use weakens the icon. The revive spell allows you to bring back from the dead a useful icon while the summon spell allows you call an icon that did not previously exist. While these icons will only last for one battle, they are very powerful and will almost always win. Other spells include teleport, heal, exchange and imprison. Since the use of a spell at the appropriate time can make significant changes to your progress, you must make very sure that your magician is protected while at all times trying to find ways of destroying the enemies.



CRITICISM

● '*Archon* looks similar to chess but don't turn the page yet, in play this is nothing like chess. All I can really say is that this is simply the most addictive strategy game I have ever played! It will appeal to strategy and arcade players alike, in fact it is essential that you possess the talents of both. My only complaint is the price at almost £11 I think it's a little bit steep.'

● 'Archon *has revitalised my interest in board games, at the best of times I had little or no talent for playing chess but I am trying very hard to master this because it is so much more fun. I love all the subtleties the game offers, not only the effect of the luminosity cycle but also how different pieces behave on the battlescreen. Have you ever known a time in chess when a Pawn takes a Queen and they both lose? Well it happens here, because the piece I attacked had been so weakened by earlier attacks my icon just managed to administer the death blow before catching a fireball that was already in flight. I most strongly recommend those of you who enjoy strategy games to buy this — 3*Archon really is a game that you will keep coming back to play. Complaints? well only two, the graphics could have been better and for that matter so could the sound. The second complaint relates to the movement of icons, once a piece has been selected it must be moved — not even chess is quite that strict, but then chess was never this good.'

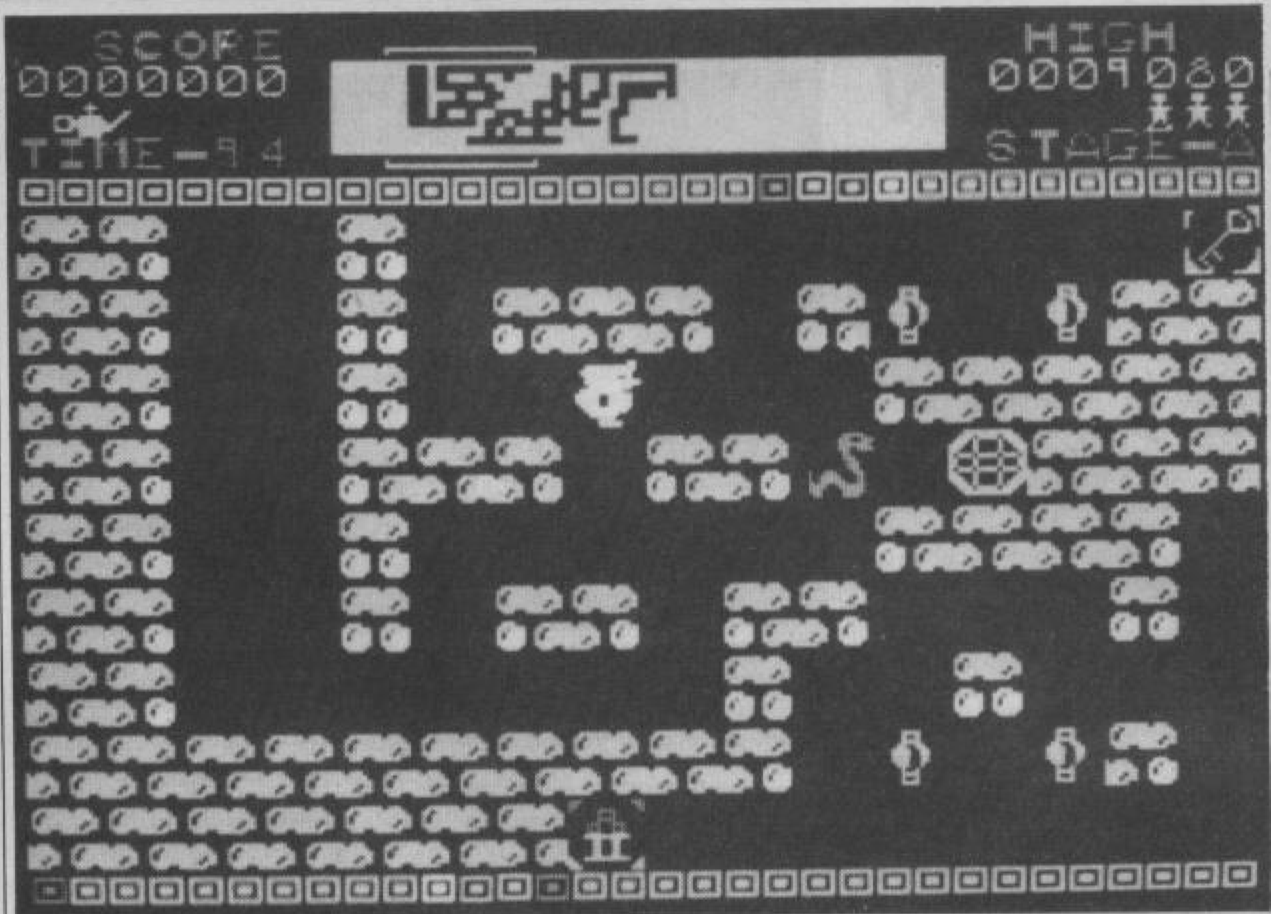
COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, Z/X left/right, C to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: average
Sound: very little
Skill levels: 1
Lives: N/A
Screens: 2
General rating: an involved game, very good, though pricey.

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	72%
Playability	85%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	69%
Overall	**83%**

QUACK SHOT

Producer: Creative Sparks
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **C.S.Pryke**



Looking for the way out from maze one in QUACKSHOT

With games such as *Toy Bizarre* and *Chucky Egg 2* there really does seem to be a spate of industrial crisis games, after a childhood spent playing of these games I'm not surprised that nobody wants to go into industry — it's too dangerous.

In *Quackshot* the player assumes the role of a night-watchman at the Acme Clockwork Toy Factory, who, no doubt had hoped that his first night on the job would be a quiet one, not a chance! He is going to face a a revolution. As he explores the factory complex he is faced with numerous toys, ducks, spiders and snakes to name a few. For some reason all the toys have taken a strong dislike to watchmen and are out to kill him. His only means of defence are a stun gun and anti-duck bombs. The gun only fires left and right so the bombs are needed to rid those toys not prepared to come out and chance a straight fight. In fact a bomb will clear the whole screen of every sort of nasty but as the bombs are limited you can't use them too liberally.

The game is played over a series of 16 linear mazes. Each maze is about 5 screens long and access to the next maze is gained by finding the key which unlocks the door. Each progressive maze has an increasing number of locks within it, forcing you to collect more keys to work your way to the next door. As you can only carry one key at a time this means exposing yourself more frequently to the nasties while you go back to get the next key. The maze is full of surprises, the least pleasant being a helmet shaped creature that homes in on you at great speed. Transport chambers allow you to relocate yourself, a useful means of escape. Points are scored for moving from one maze to another and for picking up strange objects from within the maze, apart from the keys these objects have no other purpose. As you move the maze scrolls sideways. A map of the current maze is shown at the top of the screen and a countdown is provided to allow the player a measure of progress in any particular maze.

CRITICISM

● '*Quackshot* is a very original and very addictive maze-cum-platform game. The scrolling screens bear a strong resemblance to *Skool Daze* but the game is very different. The graphics themselves are a gem being perfectly smooth, no flicker at all. Creative Sparks must have been proud of the graphics because they actually print a screen picture on the front of the inlay card. My only criticism is that the pattern of the maze walls never changes but this is a minor point because the game is so addictive. The sound is excellent with a tune and additional effects. The map at the top is a great help but beware of being attacked while studying it. The action is pretty quick (certainly quick enough for me) so it's going to take some mastering. *Quackshot* is a superb arcade game, well worth a look at.'

● '*Quackshot is one of the best maze games I've seen over the past few months. It just seems to have so much life in it, it's really wacky! With many stages, the game builds up in difficulty from reasonably challenging to dead hard.* Quackers *proves that you don't need complex plots and tasks to make a great game — just plenty of action!'*

● 'I'm sure everyone's got a game like this — it's fun to play and very addictive, but you never seem to play it because you always play the brilliant games instead. *Quackshot* has great graphics that scroll well and are nicely drawn, the sound is quite good and there is a lot of it (which makes a change). One thing that the instructions don't say is that you get a limited number of bombs and shots with your stun gun which makes playing even harder! I love all the different keys that are out to get you.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: D/C up/down, N/M left/right, SS for bomb, S to fire
Joystick: Kempston and Sinclair
Keyboard play: comfortable
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: very good
Sound: good
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 4
Screens: about 80
General rating: a very good game especially when you consider the price

Use of computer	**78%**
Graphics	**83%**
Playability	**88%**
Getting started	**81%**
Addictive qualities	**85%**
Value for money	**85%**
Overall	**86%**

DON'T PANIC

Producer: Firebird
Memory required: **16K**
Retail price: **£2.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **M Rogers and M Craig**

Now here's a very simple little task for you. You are in control of a droid stranded in some far and distant alien cargo hold which is littered with Teddy bears. The cuddlies are desperately needed on Earth to satisfy the world Teddy bear shortage.

The game is played over four platforms, one above the other, each of which would be continuous but for the gap that your spaceship fits into. Elevators are placed at regular intervals allowing movement up or down between the platforms. The droid moves the bears along the platform by firing his blaster at them, so making them chunter along until they fall over the edge into the spaceship's hold. All pretty simple so far . . . one little problem is that the bears are contaminated and must be purified with a burst of blaster before the droid can touch them. Easy if you remember to administer a quick blast before passing them. The droid can only manage to move two bears at a time otherwise forward progress will be very slow indeed and speed is important because of a little green alien which bears more than a passing resemblance to Tyrannosaurus Rex (the prehistoric version, not the seventies glam group). This chap seems to have all the cards stacked in his favour, well it is his planet after all. You can't shoot or outrun him, the only advantage being that you can change platforms by more than one level at a time (if you're near the lift) and the alien can only hop up or down one level at a time, but even so staying out of the monster's way while trying to load the ship is far from easy.

When a batch of Teddies have been loaded into your space craft it will rise up a level. The craft will take off for the next screen after it has received a load from each platform. The following screens are progressively harder with the introduction of more monsters but these additional monsters can be disposed of by knocking them off the edge.

CRITICISM

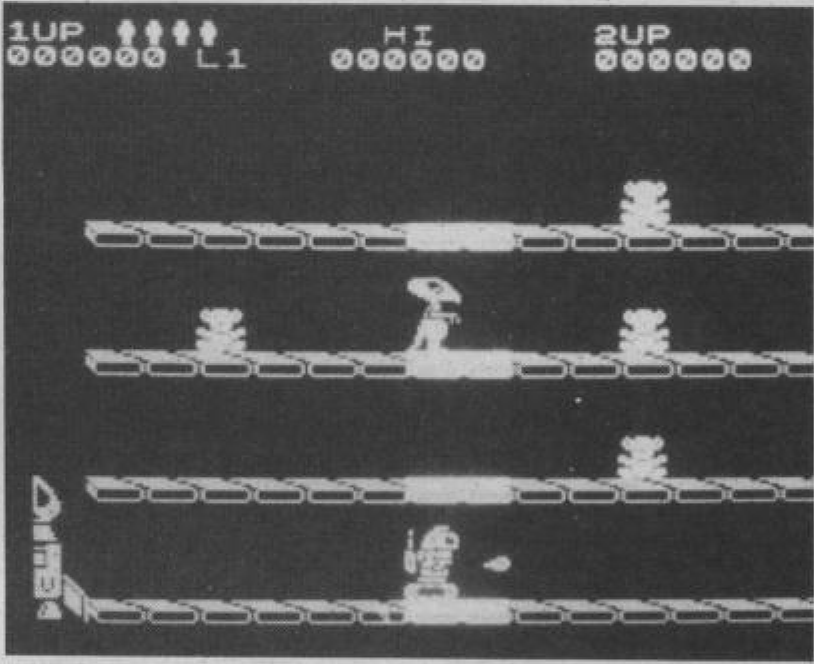
● *'Don't Panic* had me panicking, it must be one of the most infuriating games that I have played this year. You get a nice long line of Teddy bears ready to push into your space ship when out of no where a monster appears and starts chasing you. I feel that this game is totally unfair on the player, you are provided with a lazer that doesn't work on the alien who you can't run away from because he runs faster than you. *Don't Panic* has nice big graphics which are well animated and scroll well. The sound is okay, being mainly spot effects and a sort of ticking noise from the droid. I enjoyed playing this game until I reached the point at which I could go no further after that it was just very frustrating.'

● 'Don't Panic' *is a simple game in both design and concept, and it's pretty hard to load up enough teddies to get your rocket off the first screen. The Green Monster is a real menace, and I'm only glad that his mates don't wander around the streets of Ludlow! Overall good value for the price, but I didn't find it terribly addictive.'*

● 'Just what have Firebird got against Teddies then? Pushing the cuddly little beasts around and hurling them off platforms into a rocket fuel making plant. Rotters.

At first glance the game seems overly simple, but once I started playing it I found I was hooked. That green monster is infuriating — it would have been nice to have been able to take the odd shot at it and slow it down or something. As it is, the Green Meanie tends to follow you round, and appear just when you thought you'd cracked it and got a good herd of teddies lined up for the push.

A bit of strategy is needed to get anywhere on this game, it's no good just aimlessly pushing bears in the right direction. I think I'll be playing it for a while yet. Don't Panic? I hardly stopped.'



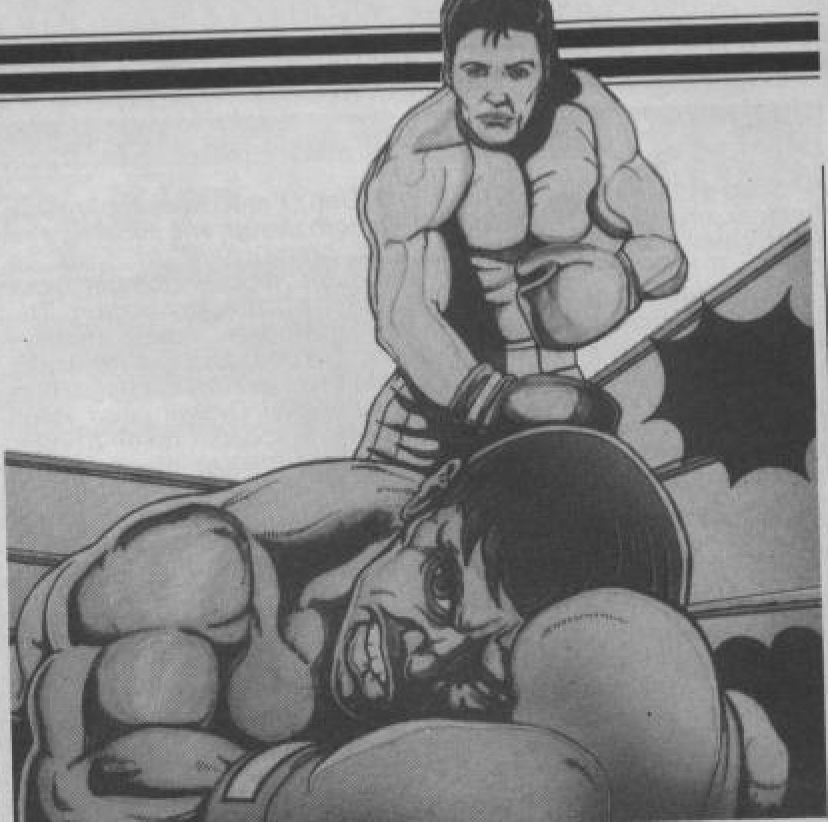
Blast the teddies before the monster gets you

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: better than average
Sound: limited but at least average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens:
General rating: a better than average game.

Use of computer:	75%
Graphics	70%
Playability	71%
Getting started	68%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**70%**

KNOCK-OUT



Producer: Alligata
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Steve Cattell**

I suppose a boxing game is a natural progression from the likes of *Bruce Lee* and this Alligata offering is the first of many.

In all you will fight three bouts with each of two opponents, Italian Stallion and Slugger Sam, and a gruesome looking pair they are too. Your first opponent will come out fighting from the the blue corner. Using either the keyboard or the joystick you control your man through some simple boxing manoeuvres to inflict as much damage on him while trying to avoid his fearsome punches. The game allows you to throw head or body punches or to defend yourself by putting up a guard. A stamina bar with eighteen graduations suffers the loss of a graduation per blow received. For every blow you score against Slugger a little arrow appears at the top of the screen and when the line of arrows extends across the screen and reaches the 'KO' marker then you have won the round.

Slugger has an advantage because his punches not only reduce your stamina bar but reduce his damage by one arrow. A skilful player can reduce this advantage by delivering body blows while Slugger's guard is up — that scores two arrows.

After winning three bouts with Slugger you are given a secret code to be entered before you can load the next opponent from the other side of the tape. Defeating Italian Stallion requires a great deal more skill because he is an extremely unpleasant being.

CRITICISM

● 'I didn't really like playing *Knockout*, I'm not sure why because it's got great graphics and even a bit of the tune from Rocky 3 at the start. I just found it totally unplayable and not at all addictive, I think it was something to do with the speed of your man's reactions which where both slow and unrealistic.'

● *'Boxing is a very difficult game to simulate on a computer and it can only be done adequately by including a lot of detail and skill requirements to make it addictive.* Knockout *lacks both ingredients, after two rounds I was bored. Neither a crowd or a referee are represented and the player only has a choice of two punches. The movements are pretty real and fluent, at times they look effective. The sound is okay but does drive you mad after a while. I think more could have been made of the game if a wider choice of competitors had been offered.*

● 'If I hadn't played the arcade boxing game I may have been a little more impressed with the game. The graphics are adequate but the whole game is let down by the slowness of the action and what appears to be a poor response by the player's man.'

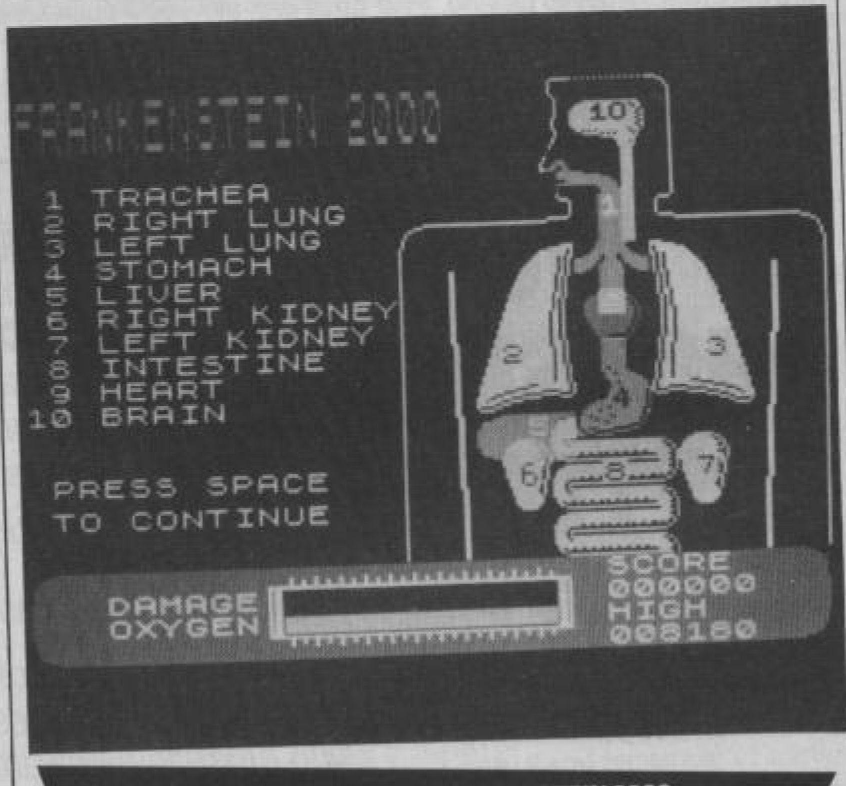
COMMENTS

Control keys: I to body punch, O to head punch, G to guard, Q/W left/right
Joystick: Protek, Kempston
Keyboard play: lacks response
Use of colour: fair
Graphics: good
Sound: alright
Skill levels: 2, not selectable
Lives: 1 for each bout
Screens: N/A
General rating: below average

Use of computer	**60%**
Graphics	**60%**
Playability	**45%**
Getting started	**62%**
Addictive qualities	**47%**
Value for money	**50%**
Overall	**52%**

FRANK-ENSTEIN

Producer: Icon
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Peter Fothergill**



The main body of the game in FRANKENSTEIN 2000

The theme of this game is very similar to *Fantastic Voyage* in that you control a sprite making its way through the inner workings of a human body. This time the sprite is in the form of a little space craft (as in the film 'Fantastic Voyage') and the body is that of some humanoid monster. Your task, as Freddy Frankenstein descendant of Victor Frankenstein, is to guide the craft through the ten main regions of the body to find and activate the bionic implants within it. But before he can be allowed to get up and hobble about you must also find and destroy the neurons responsible for the monster's wicked behaviour in the past, otherwise he will get up to his old tricks of chasing young maidens and killing off cobblers.

Your journey begins in the Trachea where you have to dodge left and right to get past the ranks of oncoming frogs (you may well wonder, but trachea means throat — geddit)! When you collide with a frog, or indeed with any other moving object within the body, the damage bar shown at the base of the screen increases. Another bar shows the amount of oxygen remaining and when it reaches zero or the damage bar reaches maximum then the game is over.

Your next stop after the throat is the right lung. Here you must get past the bouncing cigarette packets to activate the implant and then make your way out again. Each part of the body is explored in order, after the lungs you move on to the stomach, the liver, kidneys, intestine, heart and finally the brain. The graphics for each of the organs vary widely but essentially the task is the same — those areas that do not contain a transplant may simply require you to work your way to the other side collecting bits and pieces as you go. In the stomach, for example, you must collect the six pieces of bacon while avoiding the eggs. After every second organ you find yourself in a blood vessel where you can restore your oxygen level by shooting the air bubbles, but colliding with them will increase your damage and that can only be reduced by finding, and absorbing the odd spanner left about the place.

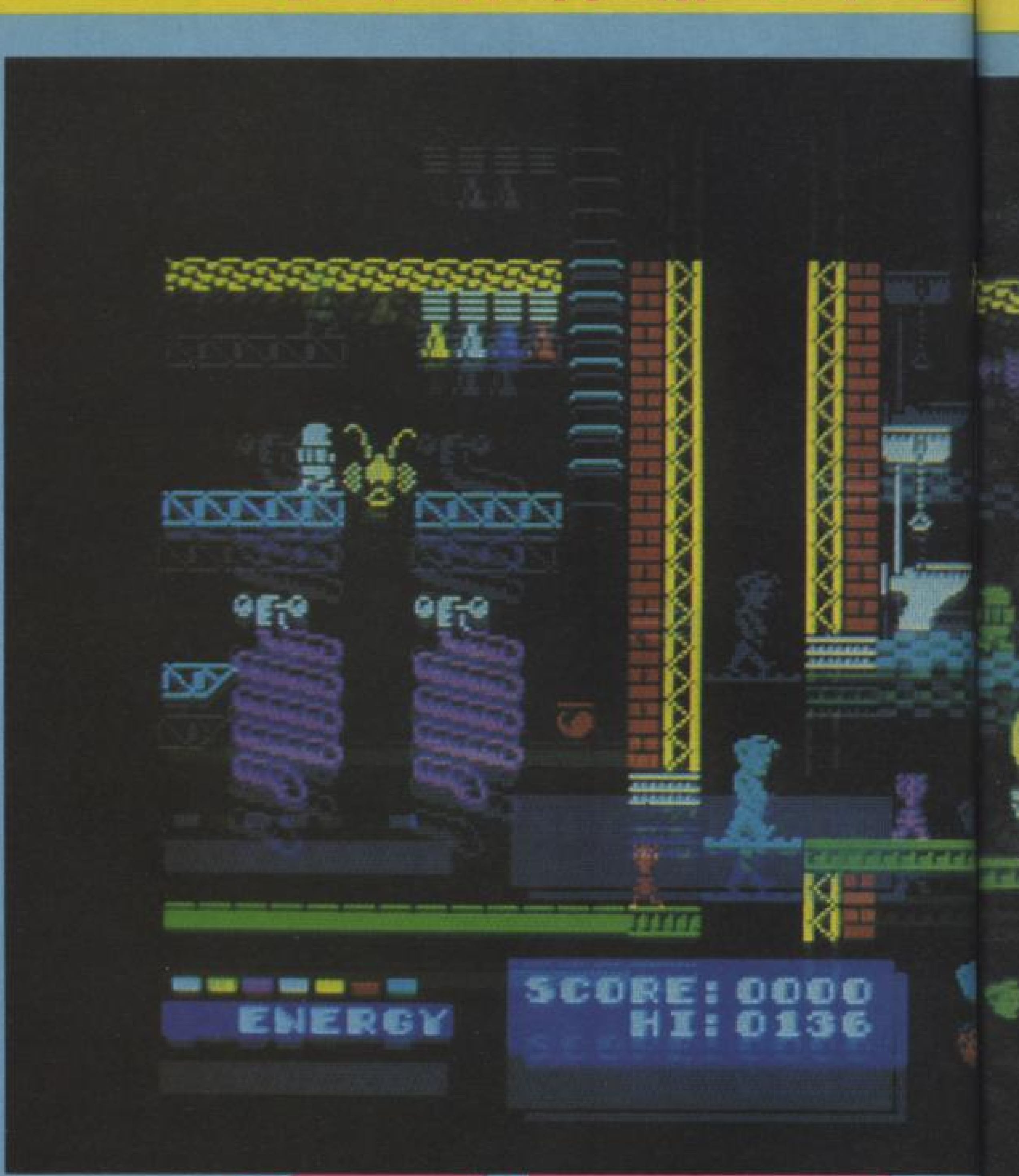
After each screen has been completed you are returned to the main screen which shows those parts of the body that can be reached and the next area about to be negotiated. On this screen you are given your current score and the highest score achieved.

38


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D•Y•N•A•M•I•T•E



DYNAMITE DAN

Producer: Mirrorsoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Rod Bowkett**

Designing elegant graphics so that loads of screens add up to some sort of building, has been all the rage since *JSW*, but this new Mirrorsoft platform games takes the idea about as far as possible, and features one of the most classically elegant buildings in any game. Dan's girlfriend (our pre-production copy lacks a scenario) appears to have been locked in the vast safe tucked in the depths of a massive porticoed, pillared mansion inhabited by a variety of unpleasant denizens. Dan arrives on the roof (trendily in time for the new Bond movie) in an airship, descends from it, and commences a mission of rescue. Should you enter the screen containing the safe, you'll see the girl pacing up and down in frustration and, presumably, in an advancing state of asphixiation.

The collectable objects in this game are sticks of dynamite (eight needed to blow the safe), a weapon to defend yourself with against the rioting rotters, and food to keep up the energy level that distressed damsel rescuing demands. Food is a relatively simple find — being a wealthy house, there's plenty lying around, but dynamite tends to hide in very inaccessible places; worse still, it isn't in the same place each game.

The house is divided up into 48 slightly overlapping screens, six high, eight wide, but they wrap around horizontally, making the building effectively a cylinder. All along the bottom runs a river. This can be negotiated by waiting for a raft to float by, jumping down onto it and keeping up with it by walking at its speed. Falling into the river is quite fatal, unless you have been lucky enough to discover an oxygen bottle somewhere. Above the river is a warren of foliage-lined caves and grottos, gradually mingling with the bowels of the house, pump rooms, boiler rooms, electricty-generator and store rooms. Above these are the commodious living apartments with libraries, bathrooms, dining rooms, sitting rooms and the like. The building is topped off by the roof with its chimnies and classically domed towers.

Different features include trampolines and entire trampoline rooms, tightropes, several teleports and an all-floors lift. Dan himself is a large animated character with a fair-sized jump, which he needs to negotiate the complexities of the house and avoid the numerous nasties, although if he falls too far he loses a life.

And just to add a little extra excitement to solving the puzzle, a nice lady at Mirrorsoft told us that the first person to phone them with the name of the tune played when the airship takes off at the end of the game will win a flight in the *Goodyear* blimp. 01 822 3947.

CRITICISM

● 'Mirrorsoft have certainly come up in the world with this game, I can remember *Caesar the Cat* — that had nice graphics and was a start. Obviously this game is going to be compared with *JSW* but I don't think it's fair to do so because the graphics are so much better, more detailed, more colourful, more lively and there's much more of them — each screen is action packed. Also, this must be the first game that has had continuous tunes (and many of them) as well as normal sound effects — I don't think it could be bettered. There seems to be more to the game element in this than in *JSW* as well.

Exploring the rooms is great fun, solving the different ways of how to get at the dynamite to be able to blow the safe is not an easy task, but the game would have no lasting appeal if it was an easy one. You certainly need the ten lives they have given you and even with infinite lives I still haven't solved the problem of collecting all the dynamite.

Is it addictive? Well I've spent a good six hours so far reviewing this game, that speaks for itself when you get to see hundreds in a year. The newly created super-hero Dan is bound to become very popular. (Part of a trilogy of games?) If you had the tiniest inclination to like *JSW* then you'll absolutely adore this game — it is much better and has much more content — highly recommend-

D•A•N

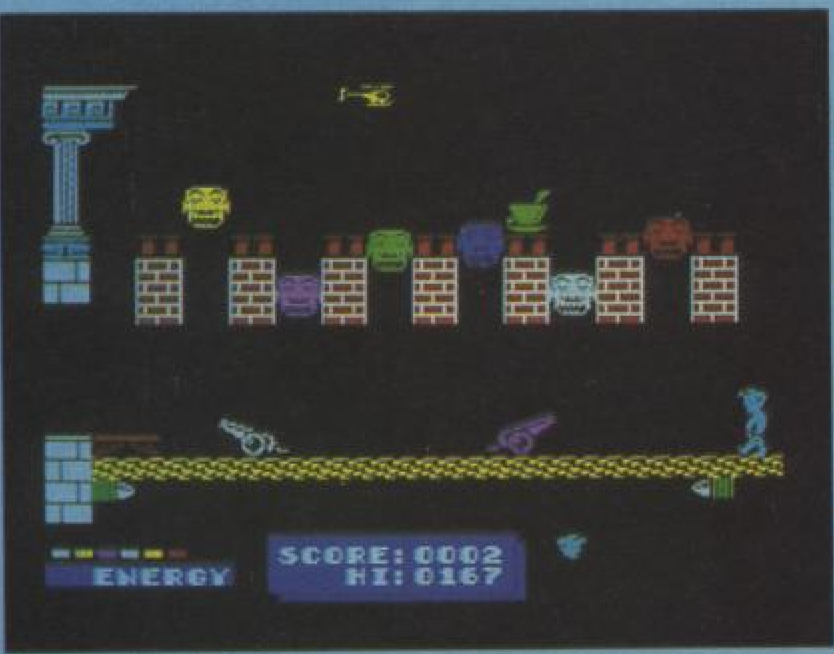


ed. Brilliant! I must now go and find the rest of the dynamite.'

● *'The graphics used in this game are outstanding — a joy to look at. The detail of the buildings and especially the grass and caves is marvellous — it just makes you want to play. The way the screens are laid out is pleasingly logical and there are some nasty traps like the well which goes all the way dooooowwwwn! The arrangement is really a cylinder with a great chasm between the halves of the house, but small platforms, often tiny triangles, do stop you falling to your death in the river.*

One thing I enjoyed is the way you have to leap from some platform high in the sky into another screen without knowing where you will land — although after a few exploratory trips, you get to know the layout. However, the placement of objects is altered between games to add to lasting appeal. Another favourite are the trampolines, these work by sending you higher each time you land pressing fire. They allow you to make gigantic leaps up through screens and even running jumps across several screens at a time — useful. The animation of the nasties is excellent, very varied, very colourful, and this game has the largest assortment of tunes I've come across. Dynamite Dan *is a JSW clone, but it's definitely a worthy successor, and a highly playable, fun and addictive game.'*

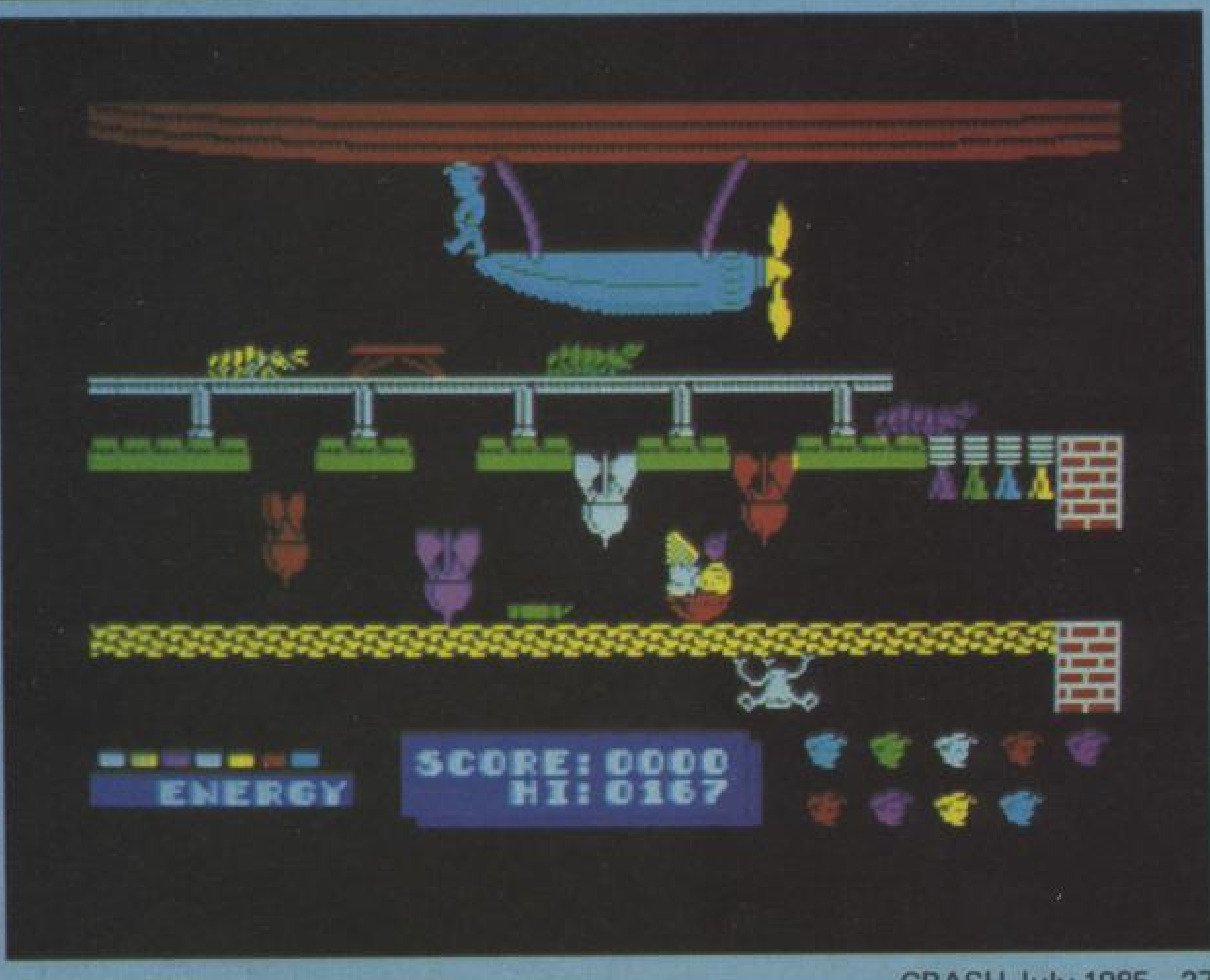
● 'Mirrorsoft don't produce many arcade-action games, but certainly the ones they do release are of a pretty high standard. *Dynamite Dan* has to be one of the most tuneful games I've encountered, and it is not surprising to learn that its author, is a musician in his day job. While platform jumping games are regarded as out of fashion in some circles, the overall combination of sound, graphics and effects in this game combine to make it extremely good value entertainment. There's life in the old genre yet!



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: first class **Sound:** mega-brill
Skill levels: one
Lives: ten
Screens: nearly fifty
General rating: Superb, value for money game

Use of computer:	**95%**
Graphics:	**96%**
Playability:	**96%**
Getting started:	**94%**
Addictive qualities:	**96%**
Value for money:	**94%**
Overall:	**94%**



A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS

ROGER KEAN hurtles up the A68 to visit GREMLIN GRAPHICS in Sheffield



Quietly sitting at home one evening last summer, watching the evening news and with computer games far from my mind, the peace was shattered when this platform game suddenly appeared on the screen. Startled with injured surprise that some upstart new company should dare to feature a new game on telly before letting CRASH know, all I caught of the item was that it had something to do with Arthur Scargill, flying pickets and a mole. It seemed trendily topical — another cheap bunch jumping on the games bandwaggon with a rip-off idea timed to catch the miners' strike? The company's name was Gremlin Graphics. In the event CRASH wasn't missed out. We got an early Spectrum version, doctored so we would could visit any room in case none of us were able to withstand the flying pickets or the infamous crushers, and thus we were introduced to the delights of *Wanted: Monty Mole*, and became acquainted with Gremlin Graphics, the company that won the 1984 CRASH Readers Award for the best platform game — far from a rip-off. That was in July. Gremlin Graphics has now been going for a year and it seemed time to visit Sheffield and find out how things were going.

HOW TO GET A GREMLIN GOING

Alpha House, Carver Street is a gaunt Victorian office block that might once have been fashionable but now lies virtually, though tidily, empty. The Gremlins refer to it as 'the prison', an impression reinforced by the long, narrow corridors painted in institution maroon and cream. Gremlin Graphics has two rooms which for some obscure reason are situated high up in the building and quite some way from the ancient lift which no-one seems to use. When I spoke to **Ian Stewart**, Sales and Marketing Director, about the visit, he told me to stop outside a shop called **Just Micro**. This turned out to be a thriving and very busy computer shop which is owned by Ian and his partner **Kevin Norburn**, the Financial Director of Gremlin Graphics. A phone link between the shop and the office, soon brought Ian down to greet me and drag me away from the beeping, squawking screens that lined three walls of the shop's interior.

The corridors of Alpha House may have been prison-like, but once through the door and into Gremlinland, a different atmosphere pervaded. Of the two rooms, one is a general office, and the other, larger, room is equipped with desks, computers and screens for the in-house programming team. The programmers had gathered specially for my visit (more to give a third-degree on CRASH reviews than in my honour I suspected — the usual reason programmers want to talk to magazine people), and were busy falling over the ubiquitous C5, which seems to have taken over from the Porsche as a software house vehicle. I never did ask what it was doing up there on the third floor.

Before founding Gremlin Graphics Ian Stewart had already accumulated 12 years retailing experience culminating in a group managership for Laskys, but the itch to work for himself proved too strong and he joined forces with Kevin Norburn to open a computer shop. 'When Kevin and myself had opened Just Micro, we always said as soon as the shop got rolling and we found the time and the necessary programmer, that we would like to have our own software house.'

The shop did get rolling and the first necessary programmers transpired in the form of **Peter Harrap** and **Tony Crowther**. Ian and Kevin were well aware from the start that they would have to put together a professional team to get safely off the ground. Tony Crowther, already well known for his Commodore programs *Loco*, *Son of Blagger* and *Killerwatt*, was made a company director and went on to write *Potty Pigeon* and *Suicide Express* for Gremlin before differences on the board led to his leaving the company.



Where Gremlin Graphics started, the JUST MICRO computer shop in Carver Street, Sheffield. Gremlin's offices are up above.

Looking around to ensure good distribution, Ian reckoned **Geoff Brown** of US Gold, who had just started Centresoft distributors was going to be a power and invited him to become managing director. But it was with young Pete Harrap that Gremlin really got going.

GOLD COAL DIGGERS

'Peter Harrap first came to us with a complaint,' Ian recalls, 'which was that his Currah Microspeech had blown his Spectrum up.' At the time Pete was at university. He was into hacking and programming to some degree and had written a program that allowed you to redesign and rebuild the city in Quicksilva's *Ant Attack*. He sent it to them, but Quicksilva declined to use it. Over the protracted matter of Currah getting the damaged Spectrum repaired, Pete visited Just Micro a lot. As Ian says, 'We got to know him quite well, and although I think he got aggravated on a number of times, we made a friend more than anything else. We said to him, 'well you're into programming why don't you spend a bit more time on it and develop a game? So we got talking and I came up with the idea of a mole, and we decided it would be a platform game. Pete's father is a mine training officer, so we decided to use that and put the game underground — a mole can go above or below ground, which adds variety. As he was writing it the miners' strike developed, so we introduced different criteria into the program to tie in with the strike like the flying pickets and the effigy of Arthur Scargill.'

It was the caricature of Scargill that gave Ian a hook upon which to hang his launch. Eight radio stations, national newspapers and

A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS

national television news gave the game coverage. 'It was a useful boost, but it was a lot of hard work, it didn't just happen — wheels within wheels to see the program got the exposure it did. Really, from that point we've grown to the stage we're at now.'

LOOKING BUOYANT

With so many software houses finding themselves in a dodgy condition lately, I asked Ian what he felt about Gremlin's position in the market after one year.

'I see it as being very healthy. As far as other software houses are concerned, their approach must be to be very careful about who they deal with and make sure their advertising expenditure is reasonable but not too low-key. They will also have to be careful about the quantity of games released through the year, with the fear of damaging the sales of one product up against another. I don't mind marketing my product against someone else's, but not against my own. It's a waste of advertising for one, and obviously the programmers don't get the rewards they should do from the sales their programs achieve.'

Ian reckons the business has got much tougher over the past twelve months and that it is no longer easy for people to set up a software house and make a success of it. 'If we were starting this July instead of last July, it would be a totally different story. We came in at the right time with the right product and the right marketing and it worked for us. Now you have to have a track record, and the way you go about presenting games to a distributor has got to be professional. The way you market the product has got to be sensible and you must have your programs ready well in advance. I think we're hitting a happy situation at the moment where we're able to backlog software so we can release it when we want, but we propose to keep releasing right through the summer to keep the name in the forefront. I would like to think that Gremlin will be one of the top five software houses by the end of the year.'

On the Spectrum there are several planned releases kicking off with *Beaver Bob (In Dam Trouble)*, followed by *Grumpy Gumphrey — Supersleuth* and *Metabolis*, and then onto October and the pre-Christmas release of *Monty on the Run*. In addition there are releases planned for the Commodore 64, some conversions and some originals, as well as games for the C16 and Amstrad. All of which must be keeping Gremlin Graphics very busy, and it seems that Ian is thumbing his nose at the traditional summer slump.

'Obviously the sales figures that you achieve over Christmas are double those you achieve for the other times of the year, but I think keeping the market buoyant for the rest of the year is very important. I don't mind getting lower sales through the summer — it keeps the Gremlin name prominent; and it keeps the programmers busy — it's important for them to be able to work twelve months of the year rather than six and it's important for us to have revenue coming in for twelve months of the year rather than six! I would hate to think I was holding product back just for Christmas.'

Looking at 'the prison' there is obviously plenty of room to expand, should they wish to. At present Gremlin employs four full-time in-house Z80 programmers all writing for the Spectrum, Pete Harrap, Chris Kerry, Shaun Hollingworth and Christian Urquhart. A company called Micro Projects consisting of three programmers write Gremlin's Commodore games and conversions, and Ian is investigating other talent. 'I would like to see our in-house personnel double this year, to a maximum of ten, so that we have at least one programmer who is competent on one of the major machines, by which I mean Spectrum, Commodore, Amstrad and Atari. That means we are on the look out for more programmers and more product.'

UNSOCIAL HOURS

Although the in-house team are employed full time, few of them work consistently at the offices, preferring to spend some time there but more at home working. 'Programmers tend to work rather unsocial hours and as the time required might mean them working all day and then into the small hours they find it easier to work in the comfort of their own homes. But they do come into the office at least once a week.'

With this sort of working flexibility, I wondered whether there was any sense of 'team spirit'.

'Oh yes,' Ian replied instantly, 'each programmer will discuss each

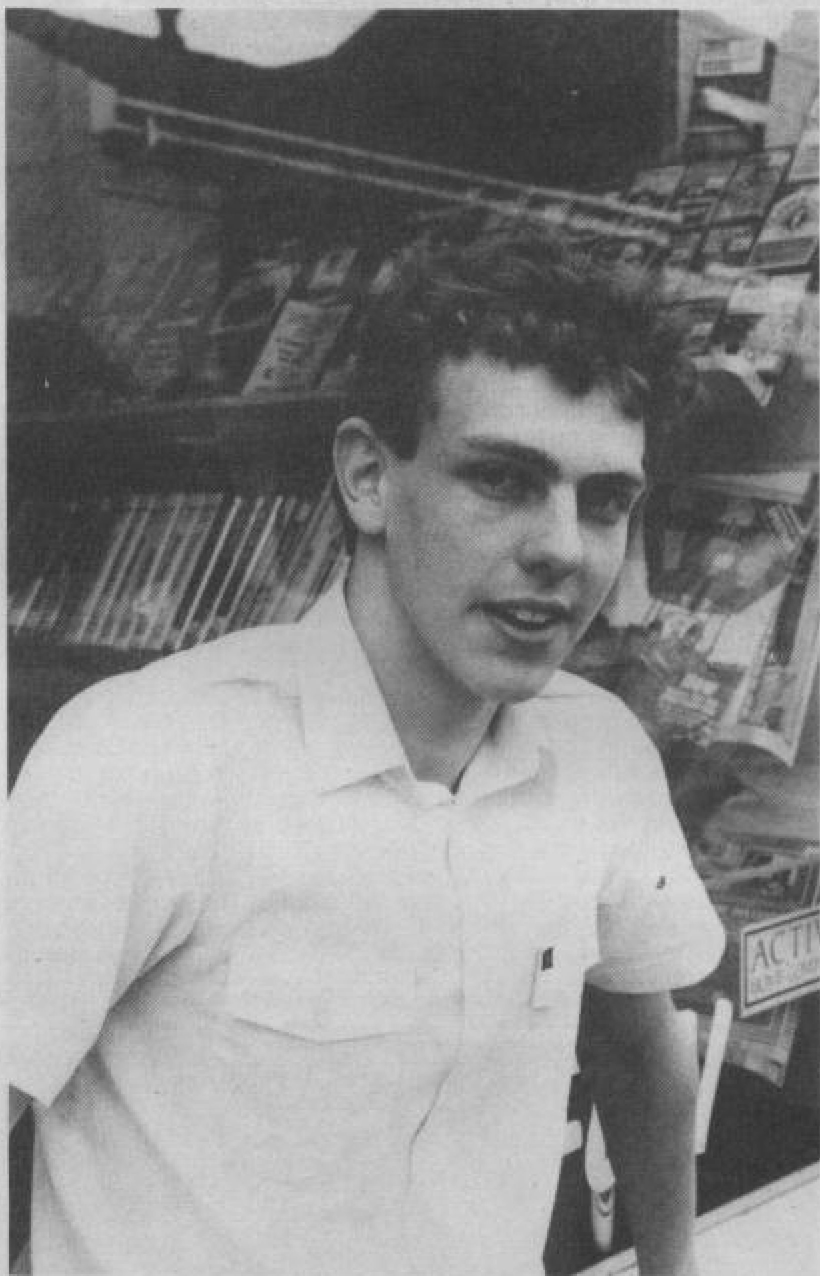
● ***The Gremlins gathered: left to right, Shaun Hollingworth, Kevin Norburn, Ian Stewart, Chris Kerry, Peter Harrap and Christian Urquhart.***



A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS



CHRIS KERRY



other's work and they'll discuss various routines that they're using, the gameplay elements within the game and various graphics — Peter Harrap does a number of the graphics for other people, he has a bent towards designing graphics and he's very quick. The bulk of the ideas for games come from the Gremlin office', Ian continued, 'we have brain bashing sessions, sit down and discuss the types of program we would like to put out — I'm the culprit as far as the characters go. What tends to happen is that general ideas are thrown about and then the programmer goes away and draws up a plan of the way the program could work. Then we discuss that again before the programming starts, so we end up with a sort of storyboard. It works very well, because you can identify the areas that you could make within the program or the improvements you can make before it actually gets started. There's nothing worse, and it has happened to us, to be half way through a program and find that it's not going to work. If you had sat down and spent a little more time at the outset you would have identified all the problems and saved a lot more time. I refuse to continue with something that I may not be happy with at the end.'

Before moving into the programming room to have a look at the new games coming along, I asked Ian, thinking of *Monty on the Run*, whether he thought platform games were a played out genre. 'Oh no, definitely not. Hopefully with *Monty on the Run* you'll see a different element enter platform gameplay. We have introduced some further exciting elements which I think the public will like. We see it as a great improvement on *Wanted: Monty Mole* and I think it will get a bigger following.'

Is he irritated when other companies try to jump on the success bandwaggon of Monty Mole, or, as Software Projects has suggested, that platform games like *Monty Mole* are jumping on the success bandwaggon of *Jet Set Willy* and *Manic Miner*?

'Artic's *Mutant Monty* was a direct hype of a number of games. We didn't feel inclined to do anything about the fact that they had used 'Monty' and were obviously hyping off the success of Monty Mole. As to *Manic Miner* and *Jet Set Willy*, *Miner 2049er* was the first, and as to whether the people that opriginated that program feel the same as Software Projects, I don't know. I see no reason to diminish our own glory when they've had such a nice success with both programs, and they are both very good programs. Perhaps it's a case of being a little bit jealous, I don't know, maybe *Monty Mole*'s better.'

One thing for certain is that *Monty on the Run* is very much better than *Wanted: Monty Mole*. The mean elements of the first game have been made even meaner in the second. As Ian comments, 'That is Pete Harrap's sheer bloody-mindedness. If people thought the first Monty was bloody-minded, they'd better look at the next one! He's done some very funny things on it.

Chris is the baby of the team at 18 (19 in December), but of the team he has the longest list of credits to his name. He wrote his first game at 16. It was called Gremlins and no one wanted it. Computers first cropped up on the second year computer course at school, but failed to catch his interest. Then in the third year he joined a computer group. 'We just used to mess about, but I became interested in how they actually worked. Then the ZX81 came on the market and I got me sister to buy me one, and I learned to program machine code on that. When the Spectrum came out I got one and spent a year trying to figure out how to do the screen because it's got a right weird way of storing things. In the end, I really learnt to program by listening to other people and by reading magazines.'

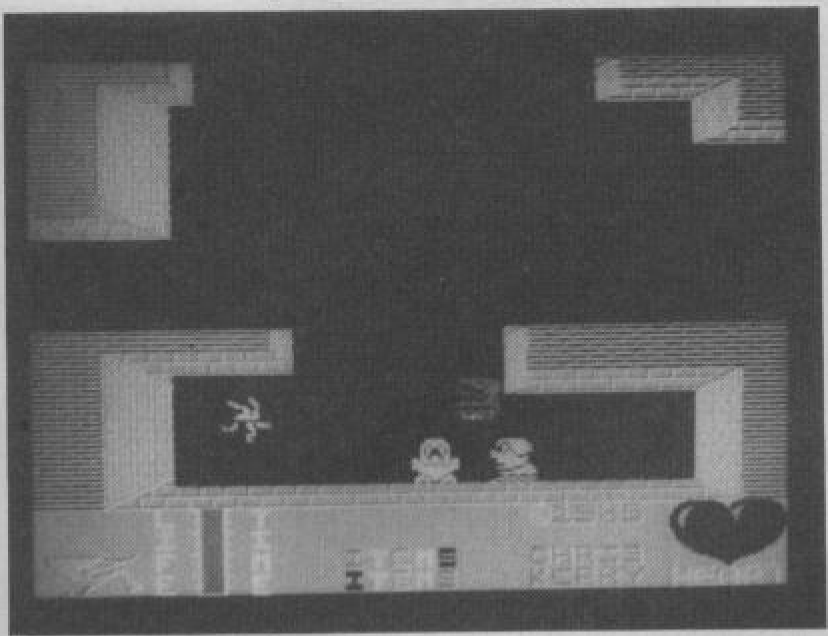
After writing a Galaxian type game, Chris turned out *Jack and the Beanstalk* which Thor accepted and released. 'It wasn't very good, but you learn from your mistakes. The screen pictures were good, but the graphic movement was terrible!'

Chris wrote two more follow-ups to *JATBS*, *Giant's Revenge* and *The House that Jack Built*. All these games featured heavily and brightly coloured backgrounds which distinguished them from almost every other program on the market. It was a trademark he kept when he moved over to Gremlin Graphics and produced the second Monty game, *Monty Mole is Innocent*.

Chris is now finishing off *Metabolis*, which is a departure graphically for him. The way the character is used in the game is quite comical, and there are what Ian Stewart calls 'some nice, silly little touches to it.' You play one of the last human beings free of the evil influence of aliens that have taken over the planet and are turning people into monsters. You haven't entirely escape the effects of their plans, however, being a bird with a still-human brain. It is a giant, colourful maze, full of hazards of course, through which you just guide your birdman until discovering the potion that returns you to a human form. Having once again become human, you still

A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS

METABOLIS



possess the abilities of a bird, so you can fly as well as walk. One of the nice little touches is the reference to infamous Gremlin crushers, but these do not kill you outright — they just flatten you for a while. *Metabolis* looks like being the most unusual program Chris Kerry has written.

SHAUN HOLLINGWORTH



At 28, Shaun is the oldest of the bunch. His introduction to computers came through his previous job as a chief video technician for a certain TV rental company. 'I had to know a lot about digital logic circuitry,' says this softly spoken native of Sheffield, 'so we were taught about microprocessors long before computers took off. I knew all about ANDing and ORing, so it didn't come terribly difficult.'

Shaun came to Gremlin Graphics through Just Micro as well, buying games for his Spectrum, but a friend who works in the shop had also worked with Ian Stewart at Laskys, so they got to know each other. The first job was *Potty Pigeon* on the Spectrum. 'It wasn't really a conversion, everyone says it was a conversion, but it wasn't. We thought we couldn't really do the scrolling screen on the Spectrum like we did on the Commodore, so we thought we would extend the story a little bit. It was the first full length games program I'd ever done, and of course, I had a lot of things to learn, and I think if I'd done it now I could have made a far better job of it.'

Shaun's technical background stands him in good stead when it comes to some of the team's programming problems, and he is responsible for the disc system they use with the Spectrums. 'We had to convert all the programs which meant breaking down the code used by the assemblers to get the disc system to run — we had that much trouble with microdrives it were unbelievable.'

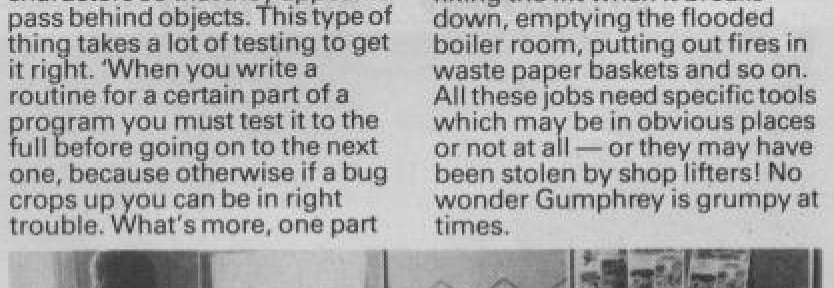
Since he is more inclined to the technical side of programming, I asked whether he considered the programming or the games design more important. 'The game, definitely. I wake up in the morning thinking, how am I going to do this next bit, but not from a program point of view — from the final effect, to get the game to a standard whereby people will really enjoy it when they play it.'

For his project, *Grumpy Gumphrey — Supersleuth*, Shaun has developed a masking technique for the moving characters so that they appear to pass behind objects. This type of thing takes a lot of testing to get it right. 'When you write a routine for a certain part of a program you must test it to the full before going on to the next one, because otherwise if a bug crops up you can be in right trouble. What's more, one part of a program can interact with another part and you can end up with such a mess you don't know where you are.'

Some programmers use the technique of writing all the algorithms for a program and then slot in the graphics right at the end, but Shaun prefers to design and fit in graphics as he goes along. 'The sprites aren't as important but on the screens you've got to know where things are. Like the lift buttons in *Supersleuth* — if we wanted them, say, in a square instead of a line, we'd have to rewrite part of the program to make that happen because the program has to know where the buttons are for it to work.'

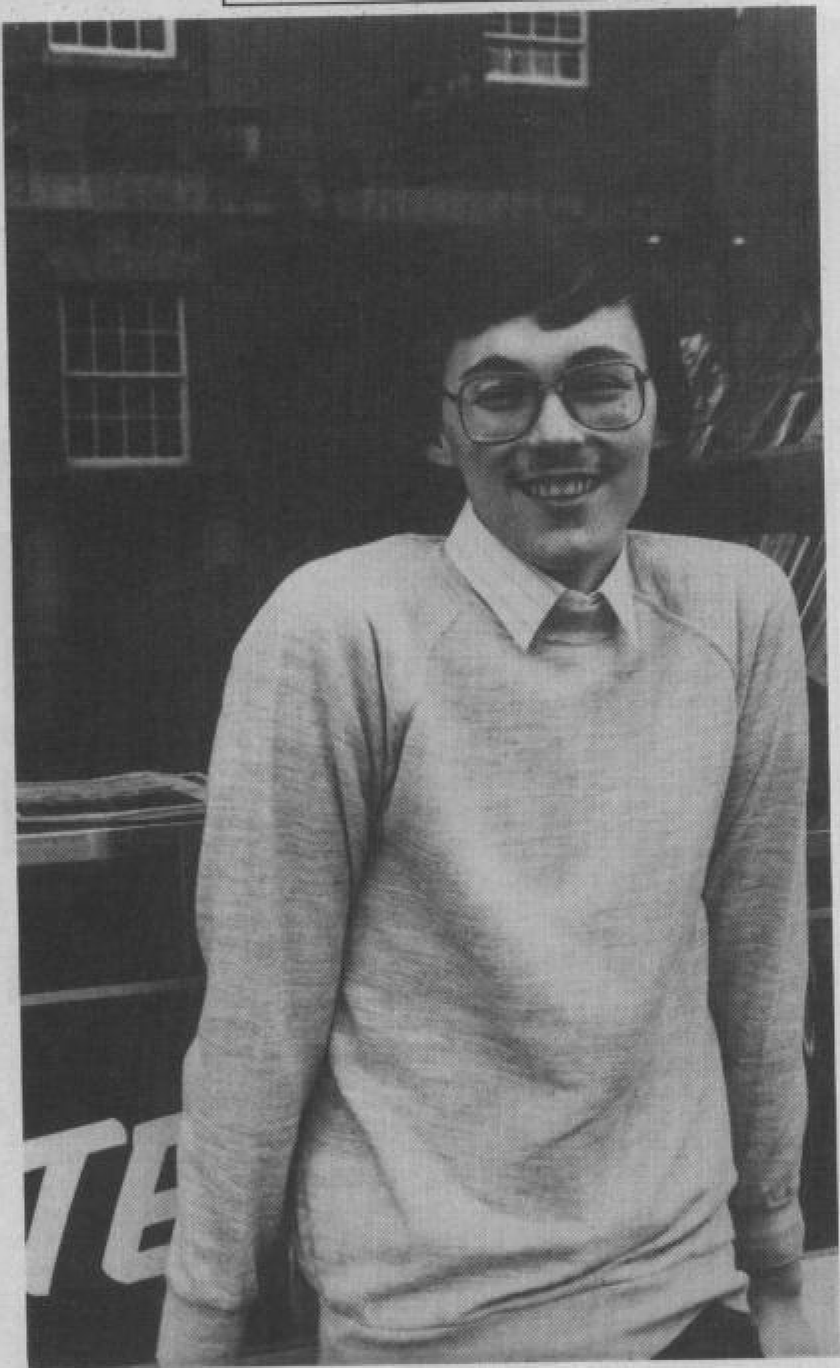
Shaun's next project is a 3D version of a platform game, 'like Monty Mole in 3D, but probably not Monty Mole.' Meanwhile he is busy finishing *Supersleuth*, not the first ever program to be set in a Department Store (*Herbert's Dummy Run*), but certainly one of the most frenetic. Grumpy Gumphrey is a store detective at (not surprisingly) Mole Brothers, an establishment with many departments on four floors. A central feature is the lift which may be directed to the desired floor by pressing the appropriate button. The lift is actually a 'room' which stands still while the floors whizz past. Shop lifters are abroad and it is Gumphrey's principal task to apprehend them. If he makes a wrong decision about who it is, then a warning letter is issued and after three it's the curtains dept. for Gumphrey.

The frenzy sets in, however, not because of thieves but because of all the other jobs Gumphrey has to do. These include taking the manager his 10.30 cup of tea, recapturing gorillas escaped from the pet department, clearing ducks and bugs out of the food hall, finding lost babies (Herbert perhaps?), fixing the lift when it breaks down, emptying the flooded boiler room, putting out fires in waste paper baskets and so on. All these jobs need specific tools which may be in obvious places or not at all — or they may have been stolen by shop lifters! No wonder Gumphrey is grumpy at times.



A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS

PETER HARRAP



When asked his age, Peter replied somewhat uncertainly, 'Ooh, er, 20'. The son of a mining training officer, Peter studied at Sheffield University and was doing quite well until a Currah Microspeech unit decided to destroy his Spectrum and thus plunged him into a life of games designing. Like so many other young programmers, Pete started with 'a little ZX81' and then skipped a big ZX81 by selling some camera equipment to buy a Spectrum. He taught himself machine code programming on the 81 and 'basically transferred that to the Spectrum'.

Until meeting Ian Stewart and Kevin Norburn in Just Micro, Pete used to do some hacking and design programs to alter existing games. His city redesigner for *Ant Attack* was sent back because Quicksilva told him they were already developing something themselves; although this never appeared, *Zombie Zombie* did allow the player to rebuild and change the city.

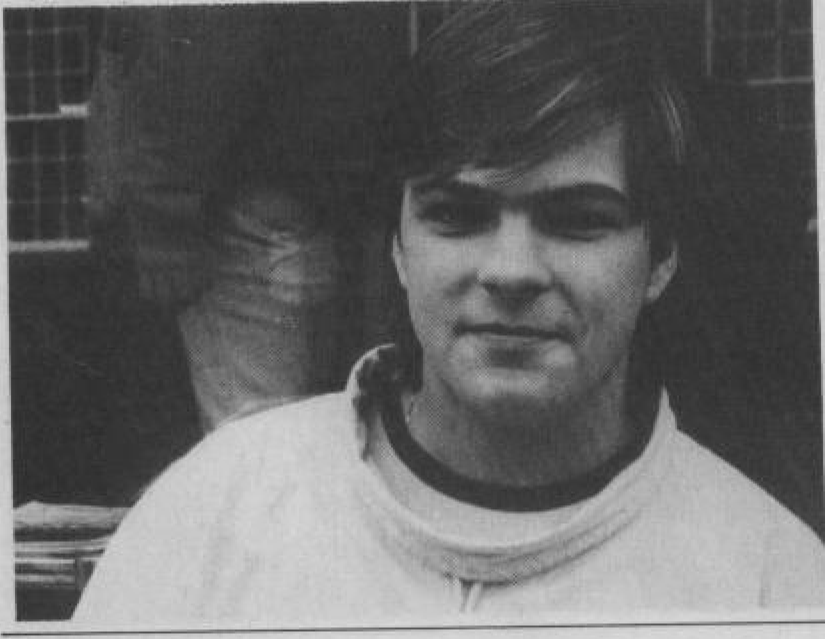
Peter Harrap hit the headlines (literally) with his first game, the CRASH Readers Award winner, *Wanted: Monty Mole*. A wicked sense of humour was apparent in the game, and it is this angle that is most noticable in the follow up. Apart from programming entire games, Pete is responsible for many of the Spectrum graphics in other Gremlin games, he has designed the main character in *Beaver Bob*, for instance. This led to some ribald comments on Bob's suggestive style of walking — the irrepressible Harrap humour sometimes verges on the — well, naughty.

Monty on the Run is the true successor to *Wanted: Monty Mole*. Like it's forerunner, it is a platform game with many and varied elements. Perhaps the most significant is the fact that Monty can now somersault rather than just jump. When asked whether the Commodore game *Impossible Mission* might have been a (forgive the pun) springboard, Pete just smiled.

The story, as we know, so far: Monty Mole, suffering from a shortage of coal owing to the miners' strike, enters a mine to steal some. After many misadventures he meets Arthur Scargill and is sent to prison for theft. His friend, Sam Stoat, has a go at rescuing him, but fails in the attempt, so Monty is left to complete his sentence. With time on his hands he takes to the prison gymnasium and becomes super fit, learning to somersault in the process. He gets out of gaol and tries to flee to Brazil. This is where the action of *Monty on the Run* takes place, as he boards a ship and tries to escape to France. Money is of the essence, and fortunately there are gold sovereigns to be collected, but in order for the ship to sail, Monty has to perform several tasks, all of which require the right tool for the job. On top of that there are hosts of malcontents trying to stop him.

The 'orrible 'arrap has programmed in numerous devious traps, some of which are so mind-bogglingly cruel it's mind-boggling. There are lifts with nasty habits, teleport beams which are only safe if they are a certain colour and some of which can deposit you in a lethal situation. Objects to be collected are placed in almost impossible positions, and often, after hours of trying to reach them, they turn out to be useless or, worse still, positively dangerous. This is not a game for the squeamish! Peter, who is quietly spoken, tends to a calmness that is belied by the mischevious delight he takes in setting the hapless player up for a pratfall. But I've no doubt that thousands will be queueing up for a custard pie in the face by October when *Monty on the Run* is released.

CHRISTIAN URQUHART



Christian now 19 moved to Manchester to join Ocean, and then onto Sheffield with Gremlin Graphics. His first program, *Transversion* was a fast grid game which Ocean marketed. Afterwards he became an Ocean in-house programmer and worked on *Hunchback*, *Cavelon* and Daley Thompson's Decathlon. Since joining Gremlin, Christian has been working on *Beaver Bob in Dam Trouble*, which was the subject of a loading screen competition run in CRASH.

CRASH readers who visited two of ZX Microfairs last year, will probably remember seeing Christian on the CRASH stand, holding court with gamesters wanting to know how to win at *Hunchback*, and having a programmers' battle with David Shea (Quicksilva *Frenzy* and *Snowman*, who now works at Mikro-Gen).

Beaver Bob in Dam Trouble is described by Ian, as a game for the slightly younger player, which isn't to say that it's easy. Above the surface of the river, stands a wooden hut with several floors. This platform section of the game sees Beaver Bob collecting dynamite. Below the surface of the river are the beaver's two dams, and a secret hideaway where he keeps food and is able to take a breath. The river is infested with crocodiles which not only eat beavers, but also steal dam logs. The object is to replace the stolen logs to keep the level of the reservoir up, whilst avoiding crocodiles, schools of pirhana and hunting scuba divers.

A GREMLIN IN THE WORKS

MONTY ON THE RUN









BEAVER BOB





A CRASH Smash

C·A·U·L·D·R·O·N





CAULDRON

Producer: Palace Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **The Ram Jam Corp with Steve Brown**

On a hill many miles away there is a green door behind which there is a Golden Broomstick, a thing so powerful that the it is sought after by the best and cleverest witches in the land, but only you are prepared to face the dangers that lie behind the door. It's not that you are being particularly brave but you have this spellthat should defeat the powers of the pumkins room and leave you, as a prize, with the witches golden broom.

Your spell needs six basic ingredients not normally found on supermarket shelves, in fact they can only be found behind other coloured doors for which you will need the coloured keys. So your first task is to find the keys by flying on your own tatty broomstick round the locality. The keys can commonly be seen propped up against trees all that remains is for you to land and pick them up. As you peruse the skies you are attacked by all manner of things. Witch-eating bats, cloak-scorching fireballs, murderous pumkins and badly behaved seagulls are just a few of the hazards facing you. Of course your magic defends you from their onslaught (witch is to say that your broomstick is actually a 4.5mm quick-firing cannon) but your life force is depleted by as much as four or five points. However by firing directly at the attackers will only cost you one point per shot so since each of your eight lives (or hags) only have 99 points to start with you really can't afford to be flippant.

With the correct key you can get into any of the caverns although you will have to discover for yourself which caverns to visit first. Each cavern presents a sort of platform game problem that requires great skill and dexterity negotiate. When you have reached whatever it is that you are looking for you must return home to add it to the pot. After collecting the six main ingredients you will be able to complete the spell that will rid the land of the pumkin and win that newbroom.

As a bonus, on the B side of the cassette is a Spectrum version of the earlier Palace game, *The Evil Dead*.

CRITICISM

● 'I find the graphics in this game very pleasing but I think the movement could have been improved. Rather than the whole screen scrolling from one side to another as you fly, it scrolls in pages, as you reach the far side of one page it rapidly scrolls across so that you are back on the other side of a different screen. The 'how do I get over there' problems in the caverns are very tricky and demand great skill. The attacking nasties are a real pain because there are so many of them, even killing them costs energy so you really will need those lives if you want to complete the game. Very attractive game, playable and I find it fairly addictive'

● *'I've nothing but praise for this game, graphic detail is marvellous and colour is exceptionally well used. Animation is great too. It's not an easy game by any means — flying through the air seems fun at first until ferocious bats (vampires?) try continually to drag you down. Finding the well spread and randomly placed keys isn't easy either, using them is even worse — as you open up one of the colour-coded doors a new underwurlde appears, offering you screens in a platform- or should I say 'stepping stone'- game. This is even more difficult than the aerial sequences, because for half of the time you don't know where you'll land up when you step blindly off one screen into another. Eight hags might seem a lot of lives to you, but you could have eighty and it wouldn't be enough. A delightful game that is bound to prove popular.'*

● 'Here's another game that has been converted from the 64. They've had some trouble with the continually scrolling screen, but the Spectrum page scrolling, though nowhere near as attractive, is a reasonable compromise. The graphics look very good though. Flying on your broomstick is a tricky business with the ghosts, bats and deadly pumkin pods all homing in on you — don't hang about in one place too long! The caverns present a totally different game with different problems, so *Cauldron* represents good value in gameplay, and the good graphics, hard to get to rooms, size of the game and difficulty level makes it addictive to play, and with a second free game on board, good value too, although *Evil Dead* isn't the most mega-fab program.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Cap/Z left/right, X/C down/up, and V to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: detailed, well moving
Sound: good
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 8
Screens: 64 below ground — a lot above!
General rating: a large, engaging and difficult game for the arcade player

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	89%
Playability	90%
Getting started	86%
Addictive qualities	91%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**91%**



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GLASS

Producer: Quicksilva
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Peter Hargreaves**

Glass, believe it or not, is a flight simulator but one designed for a very special task which is to train you for a specific task. With the aid of *Glass* you must acquire the skills needed to be a star-fighter pilot. The problem, you see, is that the planet Hygon has been taken over by a bunch of clever but nasty aliens. They have built three citadels which act as bases for further military expansion. The citadels are heavily defended and only good pilots stand a chance of destroying any one of them let alone all three.

The simulator has been designed to test your abilities to the limit as you must destroy hundreds of droids before you even catch sight of a city. For most of the time the action takes place on the planes of Hygon which is a pretty boring sort of place to be, mostly because the surface is reflective, flat and devoid of just about anything except, of course, the droids. You are going to meet three main types of droid, the first are sproingy bouncy ones, you know the sort, they never seem to sit still long enough for you to kill them, but you must if you are to avoid being killed yourself. The second class of droid appears to be patrolling a boundary, in herds. They march, relentlessly, from one side of your view-screen to the other happily lobbing tennis balls at you, only these balls do nasty things to shields. The last breed of droid is bigger but less bold, they cower over the horizon and then pop up and fire at you.

The simulator has two other hazards for you to cope with. Firstly you are given practice shooting up enemy ships as they sidle past your view-screen. Secondly, you experience the thrill of flying across the less boring parts of Hygon, at low level and at high speed. The simulation gives the appearance of traveling, on a high speed Fly-mo across a very large graveyard complete with highly coloured grave stones. When you collide with one of the 'headstones' your shield suffers damage. Many alien deaths later you reach the first citadel and a nuclear warhead is launched against it automatically, letting you sit back, relax and watch the spectacular end of one of the cities. But not for long, one down two more to go.

You're equipped with twin rapid fire lazers, centred on the screen so aiming is done by moving the craft from side to side. Points are awarded for hitting enemy targets and the first 20,000 are hard work, after which the bonuses are generous and top scores can well go into the millions. A score such as that would earn you the highest title of 'Game Lord' but more often than not early missions will attribute less flattering ranks to you like 'Galactic Dustman' and 'Commodore Owner'. There is an infinite lives option but scores from each mission are not cumulative — you can't become a Game Lord by cheating you know!



CRITICISM

● 'I am very impressed with the graphics, they are very attractive, very smooth and delightful. To be honest the game itself is really nothing more than a shoot em up but what's so bad about that? The sound is almost up to the standards of the graphics so that helps to make it exciting, as do the huge variety of alien beings — seldom will you see the same creature twice. In between conflicts with the aliens your craft passes through a most alluring transition, best described as a journey by a slice of high speed cheese through the middle of a sandwich made with chequered bread. One scene reminds me of *3D Deathchase* but much faster so it's quite thrilling. My only reservation is the price, I admit the graphics are superb but it is a little steep.'

● *'This game is instantly appealing in the sense that everything is graphically 'fast' and fairly detailed. But there didn't seem to be much of a game to it. Various sequences have some nice effects and, in the main, the game is built up of effects — the warp effect is the best I've seen on the Spectrum. Speeding through the towers is difficult because they come towards you at such a rate and the key responses don't match that rate, which adds a bit to the forward thinking. Another nice touch is that you can continue with your game from the point at which you were killed. As a game I can't really recommend it, although if you're into effects, it's nice to see what can be done and it gets very fast.'*

● 'I enjoyed playing *Glass* as it didn't get boring. The graphics were so varied that I only saw each type of alien once. The sound was well used and gave the game a bit more depth, the graphics apart from being very varied were very well drawn and perfectly animated and all the 3D effects worked very well. As a shoot em up *Glass* is very addictive and playable, in fact I only have one main niggle and that is that you don't have sights for your laser so you can only guess what you are going to hit. I played it all the way through, (it took about four hours to complete) and the final screen was well worth it.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Z-M to fire
Joystick: Kempston and Sinclair
Keyboard play: very fast
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: varied, large and fast, very good
Sound: agreeable
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 3 main types
General rating: graphically an excellent and very pleasing shoot em up.

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	92%
Playability	82%
Getting started	85%
Addictive qualities	80%
Value for money	69%
Overall	**82%**





48K SPECTRUM

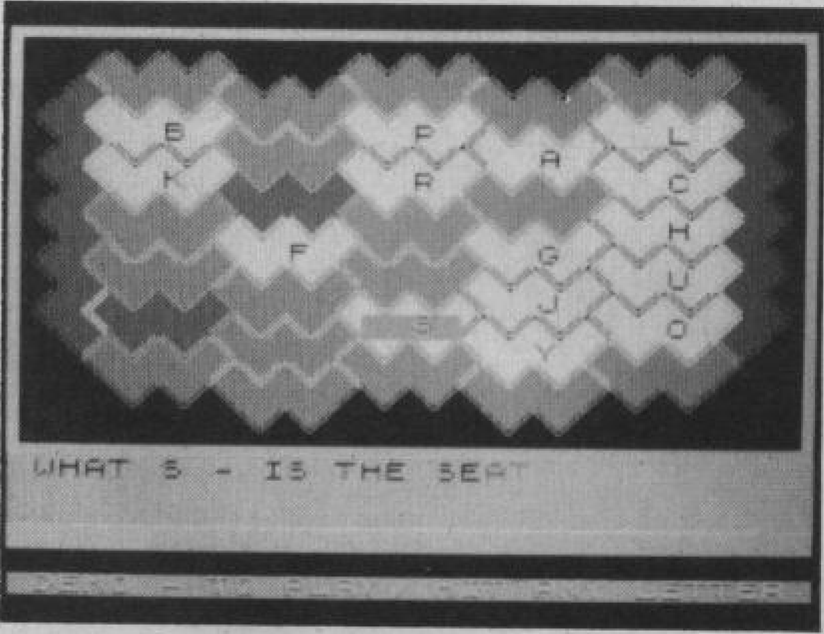
WENDER BENDER

Producer: Ranks High
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.50**
Language: **machine code**

This game was reviewed way back in issue 9 under the name *Block Busters* A rather sad story is associated with it. When the author originally applied for a licence to use the name he rather got the impression that it was not needed, but the owners of the name must have changed their minds because they granted rights in it to an associate of the author who then was able to claim that only he had the right to use the title of the TV programme. As a result, *Ranks High* changed the name to *Wender Bender* , which is substantially the same as the author's original game with a few differences. Firstly the blocks have been changed from the flat honeycomb shape to a more acceptable 'W' shape. Another improvement incorporated into this release is the availability of additional question tapes — an extra one is already included with the program itself and others are available for £2.50

Most people are probably familiar with this sort of game. The main display shows a block of 25 Ws arranged 5 by 5. Each node has a letter in it and the questions are based around that letter. For example a player asking for the block with letter **R** may get 'What **R** is a contest of speed': answer '**R**ace'. Not all of the questions are as easy as that, in fact the quiz is a good test not only of general knowledge but of spelling as well since the answers must be spelt correctly when they are input.

At the start of the game you can select a two-player game or one player can pit wits with the computer. The colour selected by a player dictates whether he or she tries to form a line of Ws from top to bottom of the screen, or from left to right. For every correct answer you give the associated node turns into the colour of your side. Whoever answered the last question correctly will get first call on the next. Since the object of the game is to try and form a bridge of nodes between the two sides one would normally pick letters that are adjacent to each other but you could block your opponent instead. The computer keeps a score for both players and allows a game for as many matches as you please.



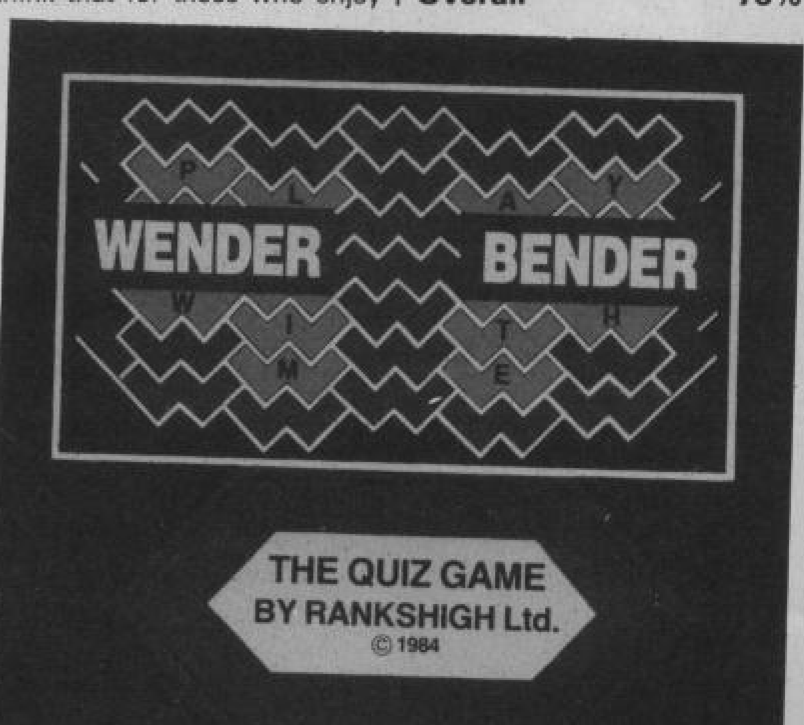
CRITICISM

● 'The new layout of the main screen is in fact a great improvement over the old. It's much clearer and easier to read as well as being a good deal brighter. The addition of extra question tapes makes a good deal of sense since you could get bored if you had to cope with the same old ones doing the rounds time and time again. In essence the game is much the same to play as *Block Busters* but it is much more refined. Quiz games have a strange sort of appeal and I think that for those who enjoy them *Wender Bender* is probably the best general knowledge quiz game on the market. I am mildly concerned that every now and then when a two-line question is printed the last few characters tend to drop off until the time up bell is heard. This can make some questions next to impossible but as I say that's pretty rare. All in all a well thought out and nicely produced game, well worth considering.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: very simple
Joystick: N/A
Use of colour: neat and bright
Graphics: much improved but still with Spectrum text
Sound: lots of bleeps and a very sweet tune
Skill levels: nine
Lives: N/A
Screens: N/A
General rating: interesting and entertaining, well produced.

Use of computer	71%
Graphics	77%
Playability	75%
Getting started	77%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**78%**



FRANKENSTEIN

CRITICISM

● '*Frankenstein 2000* has rather nice colourful and smooth graphics. The program also has a neat sense of humour with frogs in the throat, cigs in the lungs and fried eggs in the stomach. This is a game to work out, damage is easily accumulated and not so quickly repaired, oxygen is also a precious commodity. To do well you must move quickly and accurately, so expect the first few games to end in death pretty quickly. Icon have come up with a good game here, I enjoyed it.'

● *'What a strange game this is, a multi-platform arcade adventure (touch of) all taking place with a human body. There are lots of different ideas within the game like dodging frogs in the throat and shooting oxygen bubbles for more air. The sound could have been improved but it's alright. The graphics themselves are very smooth with a lot of detail. Keyboard play is very responsive which is just as well. This game is worth a look as it represents pretty good value.'*

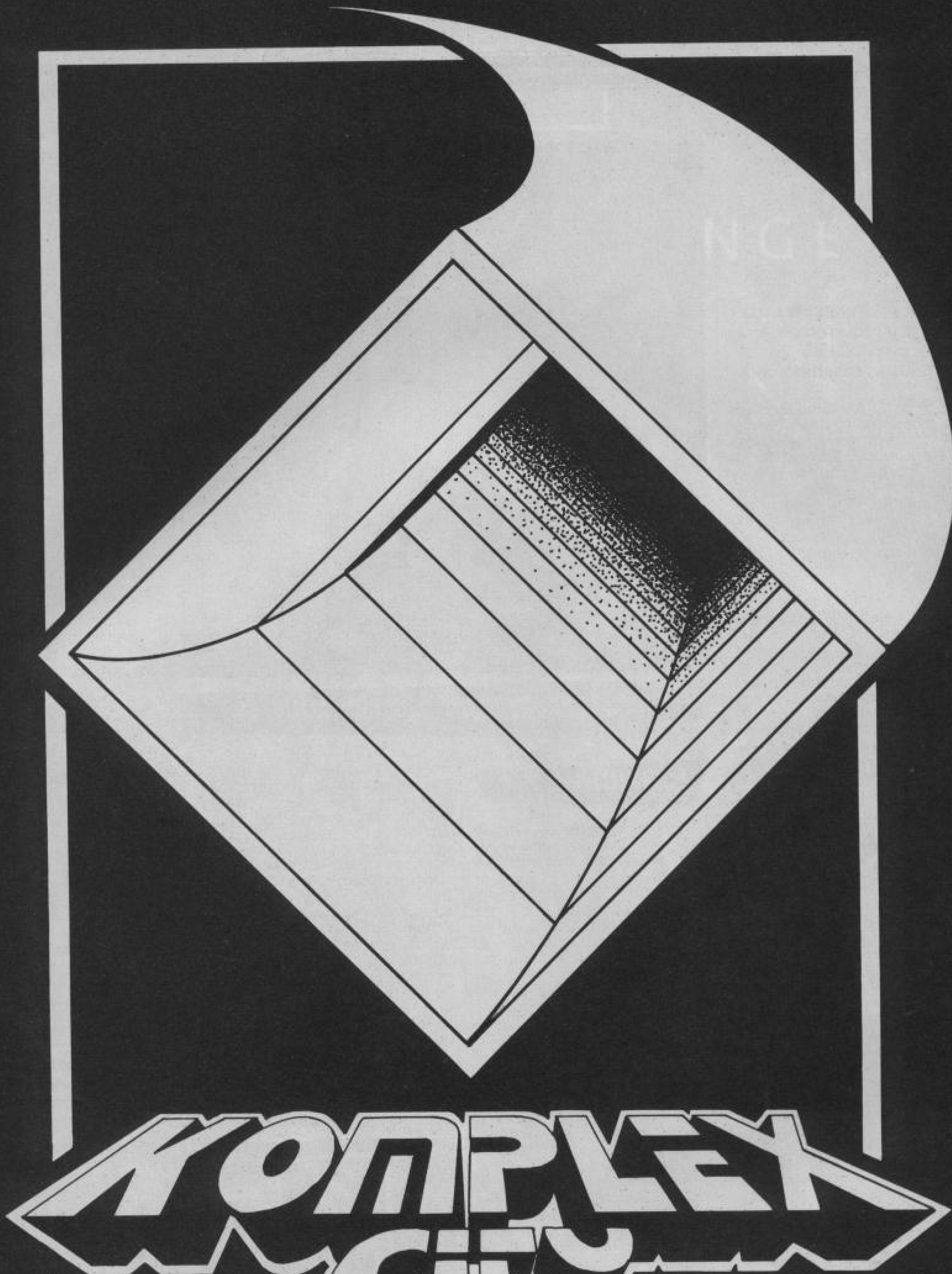
● 'I thought the route round the body was a little strange, you start in the throat down to the lungs, stomach, intestines and then you go back up the heart and finish up in the brain. While the graphics worked well I was a little disappointed with the sound simply because there was so little of it, when you collide with a nasty all you hear is a minute ticking noise which is easily lost. Sound aside this game does require skilfull play, mostly because of the limits imposed by the oxygen and damage levels, also it has quite a lot of variation from screen to screen.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, space to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: good response
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: fast and smooth
Sound: pretty poor
Skill levels: 1
Lives: depends on damage and oxygen level
Screens: 10
General rating: a better than average game.

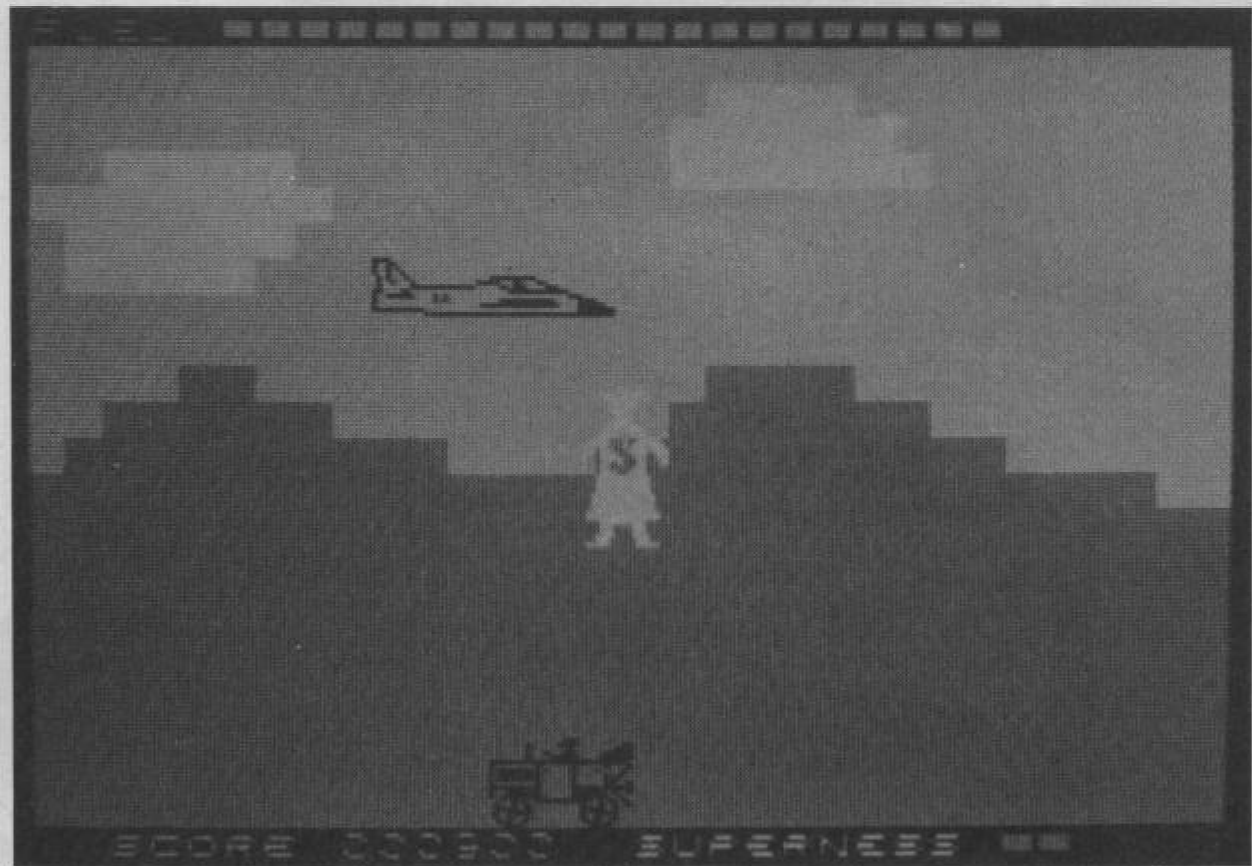
Use of computer	69%
Graphics	80%
Playability	80%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**76%**




KOMPLEX
CITY
LEGEND
48K SPECTRUM

SUPER-GRAN

Producer: Tynesoft Ltd.
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**



Superness isn't looking too good for Gran. Trapped in an unattractive blocky landscape, no wonder she needs an anti-grav belt

Not that CRASH readers get much opportunity to watch television but you may have noticed a Television series called 'Super Gran'. It is based on the unlikely adventures of a turbo charged Grandmother. The story began when she was sitting in the house feeding something when she was accidently zapped by a special ray fired from the upstairs room of a tenament block. The ray was in the care of one Mr Skunner Campbell, the bad guy of the game. Skunner in his turn had pinched it from Professor Black, the ray's inventor. Anyway enough of this, the fact is that the otherwise quiet and feeble Granny was instantly converted into a megabeing able to perform feats that make Daley Thompson look like our assistant editor. The game is based on the dear old lady's adventures, her attempts to put right wrongs where no Gran has righted wrongs before.

The game consists of five different game-screens and you must survive each part to move onto the next. First off, Gran flies over Chisleton on her flycycle, battling it out with an imposter Gran on a similar machine. Screen Two sees you equipped with an anti-gravity belt which, when activated, allows you to drift up. Turn it off and down you go again. You must stop cars running over the cats while at the same time dodging planes and balloons. Gran can move left or right, but only when hovering, the background scrolling behind her.

The third game uses a scrolling road. The Professor is trying to get his new invention to the science exhibition and your task is to guide him there, avoiding the pot holes and kerbs as you speed along the winding way — of course Skunner is making a nuisance of himself. Onto the fourth — here you must scale a cliff to recover the invisibility machine left at the top. Moving from ledge to ledge, you find yourself facing all sorts of perils — weak ledges, nasty animals and the like. Mr Skunner has gone to the massive expense of hiring a helicopter from which he drops bombs on you. On top of all this the tide's coming in so don't dally. If you manage to get hold of the machine then its powers may help to defeat the mob on the next screens, all of which follow similar themes.

CRITICISM

● 'And I thought the days of low resolution graphics were dead! This game has managed to revive them for use in some of the screens. *Super Gran* is following the lines of the more feeble TV/film rip offs, it will be the name that sells this game. Thank God the sound can be turned off it nearly drove me round the bend. The keyboard response was less than brilliant especially when trying to fire. I had hoped to find Billy Connolly on the B side but no, what a shame, something like that is desperately needed to put some life into this expensive package.'

● *'Well here we go with yet another TV spin off. 'Super Gran' is a programme that I am unfamiliar with so perhaps I am unable to appreciate the game fully. While the various arcade games are challenging and the game is playable I found that it was not addictive and I am not sure that knowing the TV programme would have helped. On the whole then a fairly ordinary game and certainly nothing to fall over about.'*

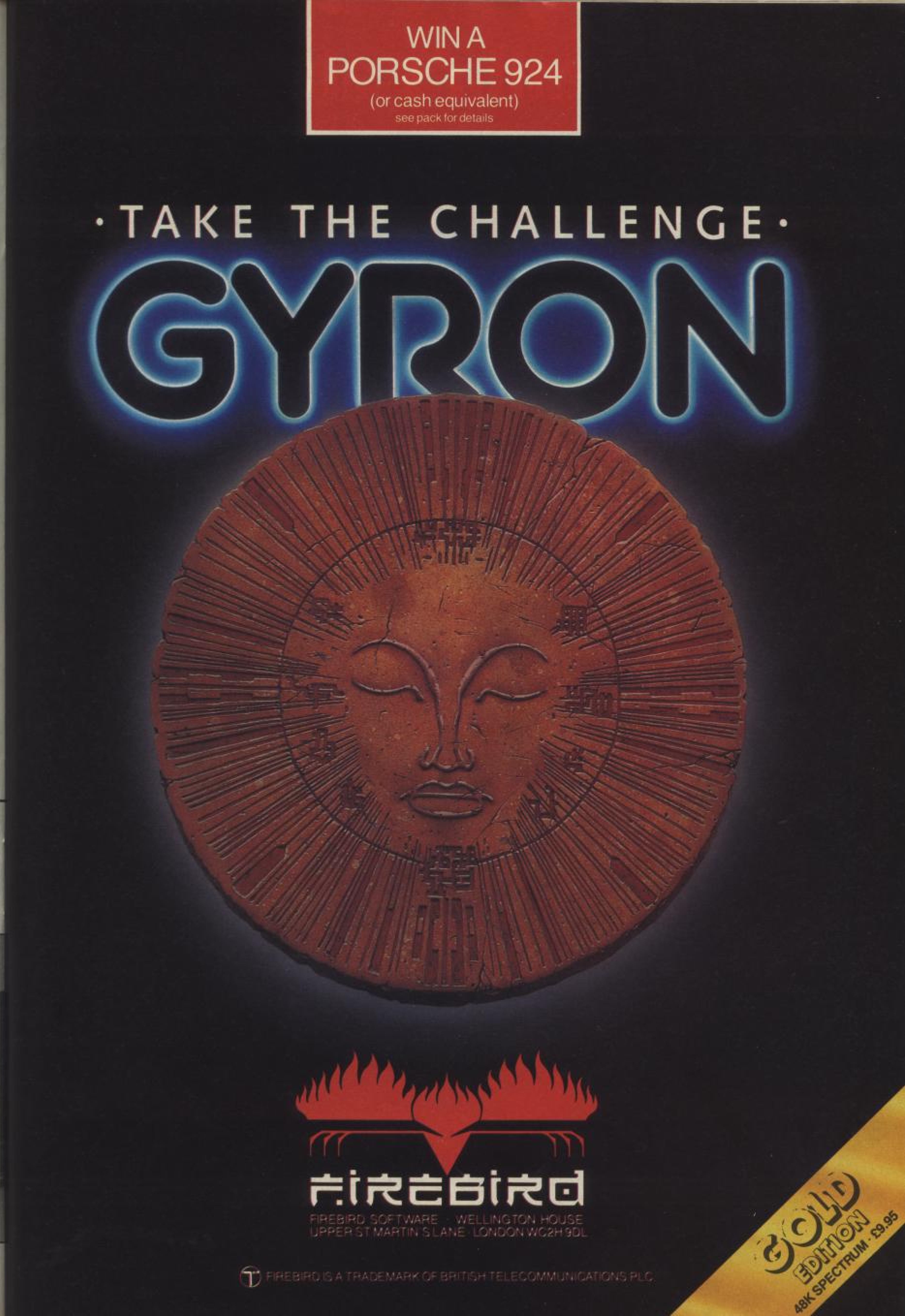
● 'I hate it. If you enjoy badly drawn and frustrating games then this is for you but I would rather forget I had ever seen it. What annoys me most of all is the price, I mean £9.95! What on earth do they think they are selling here, TV air time? It is not just the price that makes the graphics seem so bad: while there are some acceptably well drawn images that manage to move smoothly, the backdrops are ludicrous. I've seen better graphics in *Snowball*. The opening screen is typical, the flycycles are good except they are so huge there is virtually no room for them to manoeuvre. I have found a way of making sure that you win the first screen. Position yourself in the centre of the screen and fire rapidly left and right, that way you are certain to hit the targets before they get onto the screen fully. Good playing tip ya, well I have a much better one: Don't bother.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q/A up/down, Space to fire, also user definable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: poor response
Use of colour: boring and flat
Graphics: in some cases very poor
Sound: awful
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 4
Screens: 8
General rating: waste of money.

Use of computer	**80%**
Graphics	**46%**
Playability	**48%**
Getting started	**67%**
Addictive qualities	**45%**
Value for money	**15%**
Overall	**43%**




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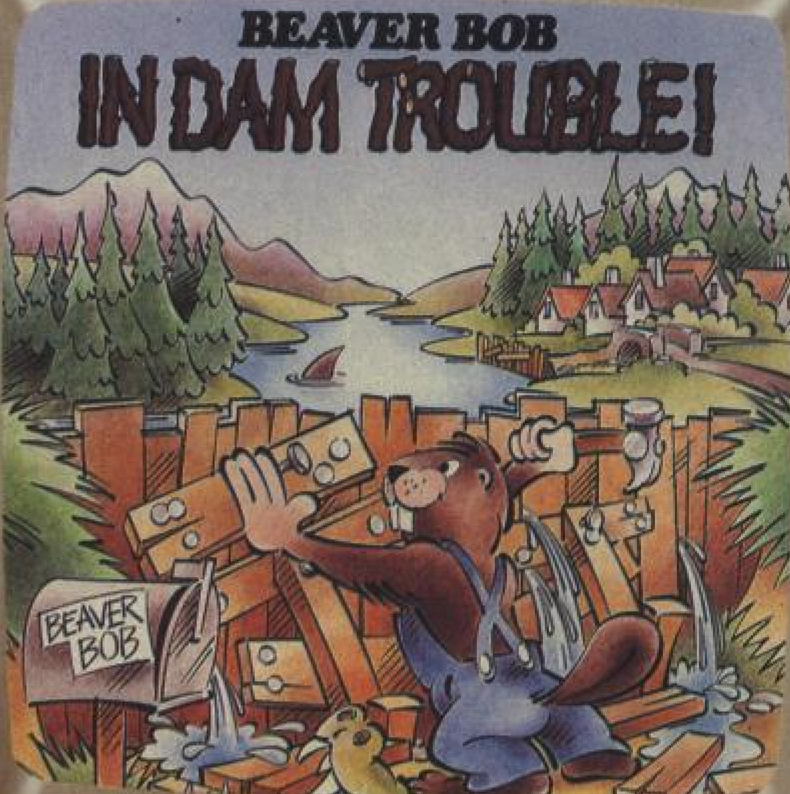
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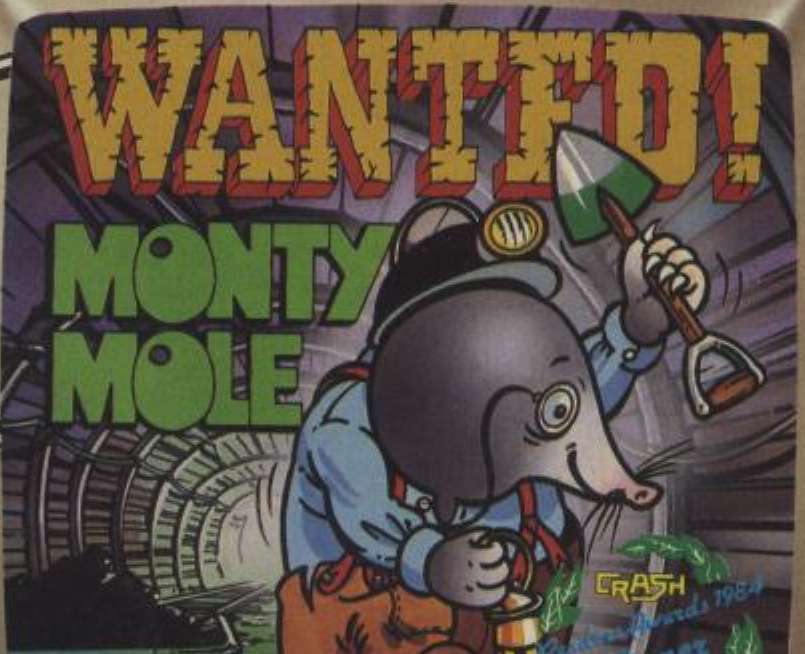


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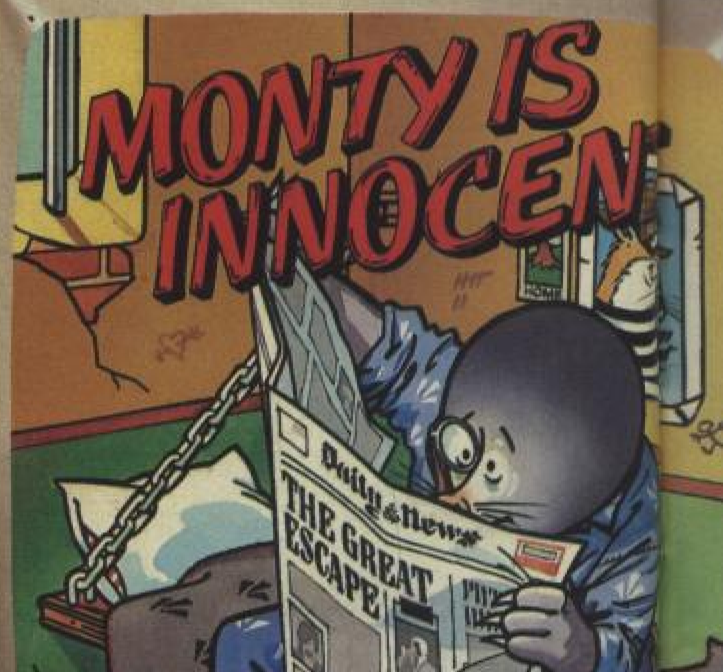


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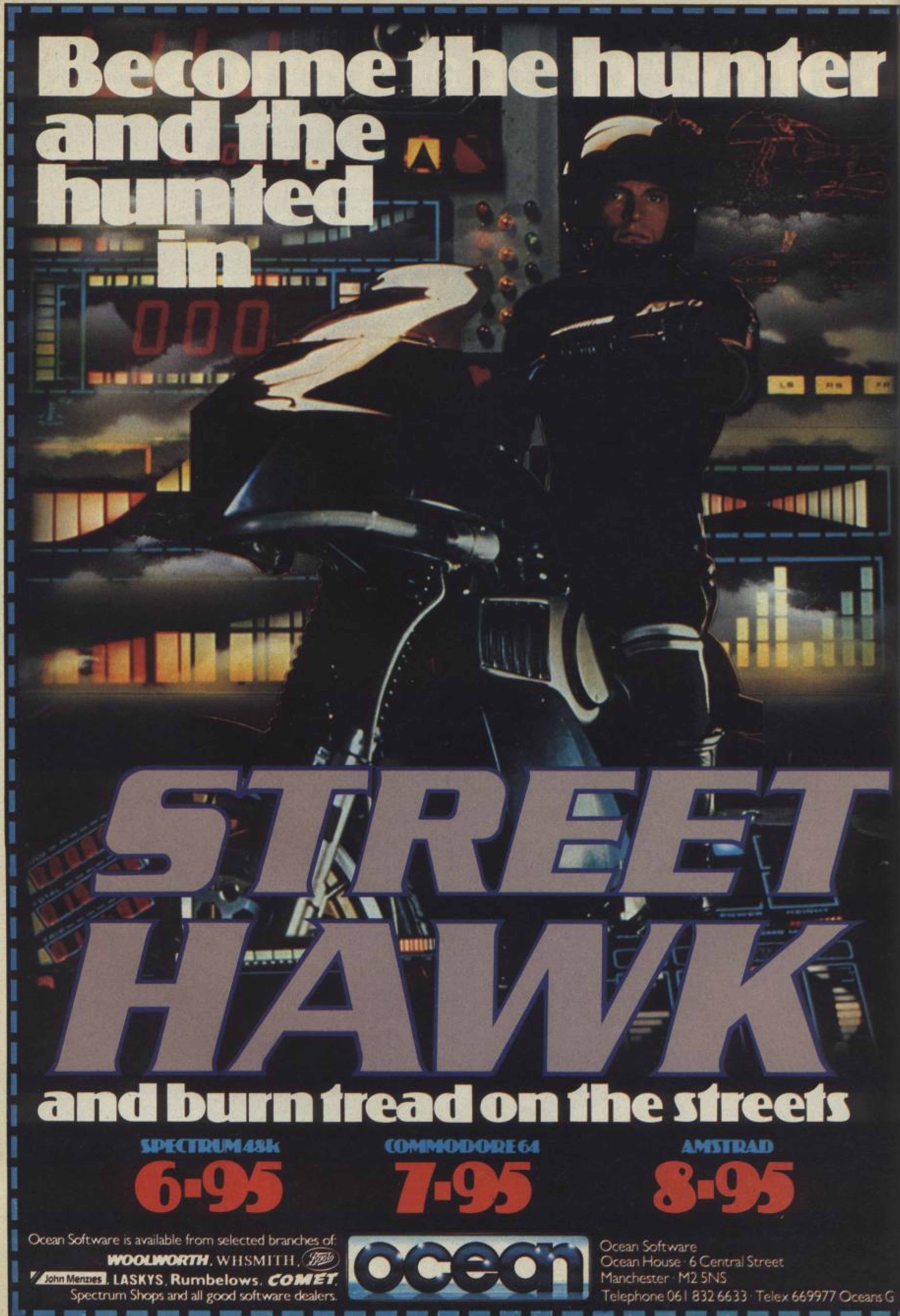
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WHERE IS HE NOW?
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Monty Mole
SAM STOAT
SAFEBREAKER
SWAG
The underworld are rallying round to help this innocent folkhero throw off the chains of oppression and find a new life in a sunnier climate. But even the best kept secrets can be betrayed and Monty must surface at some time on his journey to the channel ports.
A shy and slinky rodent the cunning Sam Stoat tests his skill's robbing the homes of the rich and wealthy. It all seems too easy... until he encounters the upperclass bodyguards and a high priced lot of heavies they are.
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Crash back

ROBIN CANDY and LLOYD MANGRAM patch up their grievances and work together to bring you this month's CRASHBACK on the highlights of issue 8

GAMES REVIEWED

Blackhawk **Micro Olympics**
Match Point **Stage Coach**

BLACK HAWK

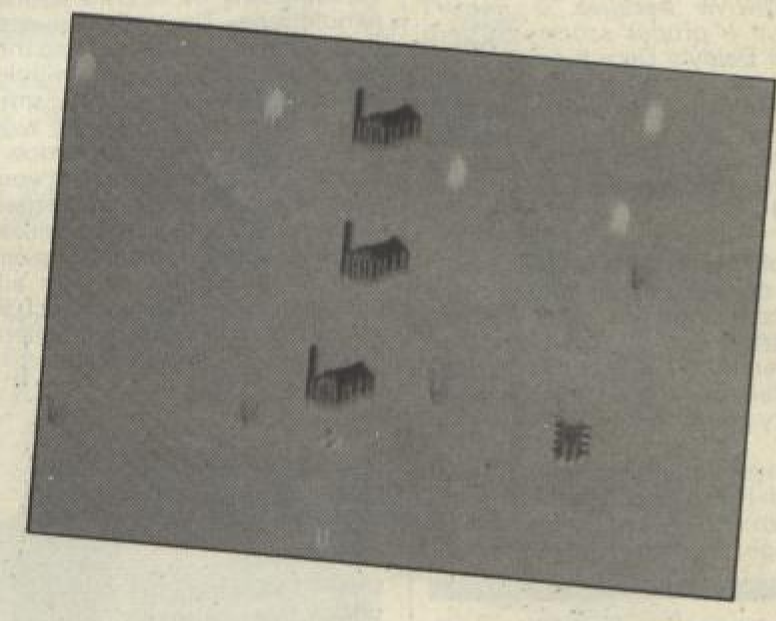
Creative Sparks

The time is in the future, the place is a group of heavily defended islands. You fly your Black Hawk aircraft and your mission is to seek and destroy the enemy airfields and missile launching sites. The task is made all the harder by tanks, anti-aircraft guns, helicopter gunships plus many other things that only appear if you get to a certain point in the game. Your aircraft has a computer attack system which features a two screen display — the defence screen and the attack screen. In the attack screen a small yellow U at the bottom indicates vertical position and a white cross sight may be moved over targets. When this sight goes red a missile is automatically fired towards it to detonate the target. This can be used to destroy ground installations, tanks and flying targets. If a tank or a flying target or an enemy missile reach the base of the screen the computer automatically switches to the defence screen. On this screen you can actually see your Black Hawk aircraft, which is at the base of the screen, and you must destroy the on-coming enemies with your cannon before they get you. Success at this returns you to the attack screen.

Use of computer	91%
Graphics	89%
Playability	95%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	87%
Overall	92%

At the end of a mission you are given an Optimum Target Percentage Figure (OTPF), this is calculated by how many enemy installations you have successfully destroyed. If this percentage is high enough then you will be given additional weaponry. This can also be removed if on your next mission your percentage isn't high enough.

At the time *Black Hawk* was released it was a very good shoot em up but by today's standards it seems to be just above average. The graphics while they do their job aren't perfect but the sound is still reasonable. *Black Hawk* is still quite addictive and as with most other shoot em ups it is instantly playable but for me it just seems a bit dated. If you really like shoot em ups then it's worth buying, otherwise you might as well stick to *Moon Cresta*.
RC



Black Hawk *is still one of the best shoot em ups around in my opinion. Okay, the graphics aren't the best in the world but the game is so addictive you don't mind. The biggest advantage* Black Hawk *has over many other games is that it is instantly playable and what's more it doesn't wear off after a while. The sound is quite good especially the tune at the end of a bombing run. Overall still a good shoot em up which makes an enjoyable alternative to all those arcade adventures and platform games.*
LM

(Rob) Most of the ratings should go down by about 10 — 15%, except perhaps the use of computer and playability which should go down by about 5%. This game hasn't survived the test of time at all well, I think that its graphics let it down the most, otherwise a reasonable shoot em up.

(Lloyd) I disagree, only the graphics rating should go down by about 10% the rest can stay the same. It is still very enjoyable and definitely worth buying.

MICRO OLYMPICS

Database

Micro Olympics is an adaptation of the well known arcade game, 'Track and Field'. There are 11 events to choose from, 5 running events, which include 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 metres, 3 throwing events, javelin, discus and hammer and 3 jumping events, long jump, high jump and pole vault.

The running events are controlled in the usual manner, by waggling the joystick left to right. In each running event you compete against the computer and the clock. Most of the events require three keys to be defined before starting. The computer goes first on all the field events to show how it is done, you then take part to see if you can beat the computer and create a new world record.



Micro Olympics was the first good 'Track and Field' game on the Spectrum, all the previous efforts seem to feature boring little stick men as the main characters. The graphics are quite poor but they do serve their purpose. Sound is also poor but colour is used quite well. The game has a few nice features, try releasing the hammer or discus at the wrong moment. If you like 'Track and Field' games it is not really worth getting *Micro Olympics* now because it is very dated.
RC

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	76%
Playability	78%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	74%
Value for money	75%
Overall	77%

When Micro Olympics *was first released we hadn't been treated to the wonders of the track-and-field-destroy-your-keyboard type games before and this was quite novel. For its time it was a pretty decent game, the graphics were well above average and the animation was*

Crash back

quite good. If Micro Olympics *was released now I fear it would get a hostile reception from the reviewers because it looks very tacky when compared against today's cream of the games, although the colour is quite well used. This is certainly not addictive because it doesn't have a proper scoring system like* Daley's Decathlon *so there are no goals to aim for. The playability isn't too bad but the game soon loses its appeal. Overall a pretty run-of-the-mill game by today's standards.*
LM

(Rob) Most of the ratings should go down by about 10% or more except perhaps the Getting Started and Use of Computer. Overall *Micro Olympics* is quite dated now but for its time it was very good.

(Lloyd) I'm afraid I have to agree with Rob for once (is this the end of an era?) *Micro Olympics* is no longer worth forking out for.

MATCH POINT
Psion

Match Point is a 3D tennis simulation that can be played with one or two players. The view of the green court is from the commentator's box. At the back of the court is the score-board showing all the relevant details about games,sets and matches. On the right hand side of the court is the umpire and on either side of the net are the ball boys.

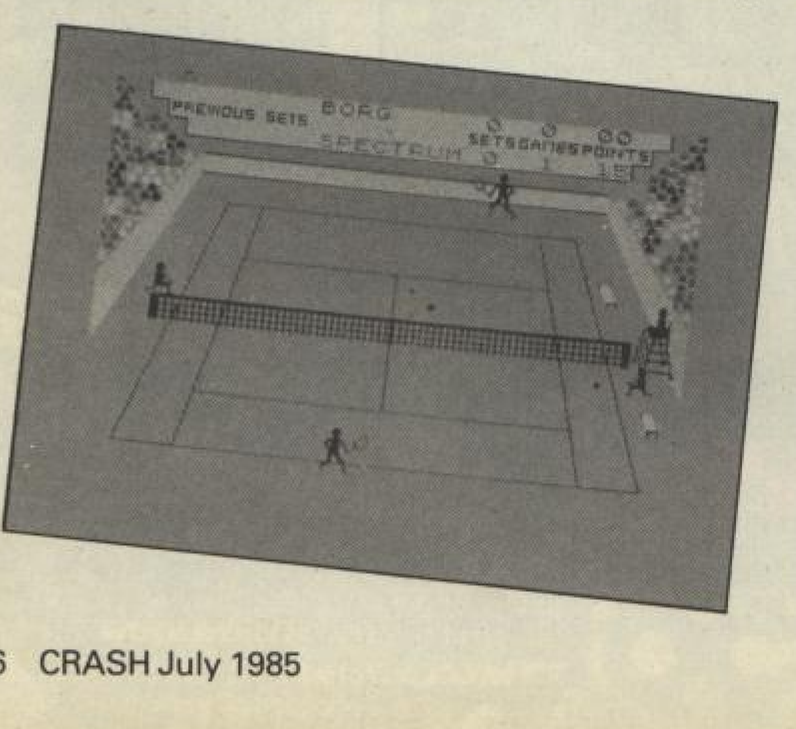
The game closely follows the rules of lawn tennis, a match being played over three or five sets and the winner winning two or three sets respectively. You must win at least 6 games and have a two game lead to win a set. If both players win six games then a tie break comes into being automatically except in the final set when play continues until one player has at least a two game lead. Scoring, changing ends and service all follow the accepted rules of lawn tennis.

The game can be controlled by either keys or joysticks, the fire button being used to serve, to change racket swing and hit the ball. The height of the ball and its speed are determined by how the ball is hit and with what swing.

Match Point was incredibly advanced for its time, it still outshines many of today's sports simulations. The graphics and animation of the players and the ball are superb, the only niggle being on first playing the game you tend to think there are two balls because of the shadow. There isn't much sound but you get so engrossed that you forget all about it. Quite a bit of skill is required to gain full control over your character but as with all games practice makes perfect. If you like sports simulations then this is certainly worth buying.
RC

Use of computer	87%
Graphics	92%
Playability	90%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	86%
Overall	89%

Match Point *is THE tennis simulation for the Spectrum. Even by today's standards it is a very good game. The graphics are excellent and put many recently released simulations to shame. It takes a while to get used to the way you control your character but once you have sussed it out it becomes quite easy. Addictive qualities are quite hard to judge on sports simulations of this kind because you can play two player games which means that you can always have plenty of competition but if your opponent is useless at the game then you can get bored of it. Of course you can play against the computer but it is only a matter of time before you can beat it on the harder levels of play.* Match Point *should go down as one of the Spectrum classics, it is a pity that Psion don't release more games.*
LM



(Rob) Looking at the rating now I am tempted to put the Use of Computer up by about 5% because you can cater for most joysticks with user definable keys. I am also tempted to put the Overall up by about 2% because I think it is a great game that is well worth buying.

(Lloyd) I wouldn't quarrel with the ratings at all. *Match Point* is simply a classic!

STAGE COACH
Creative Sparks

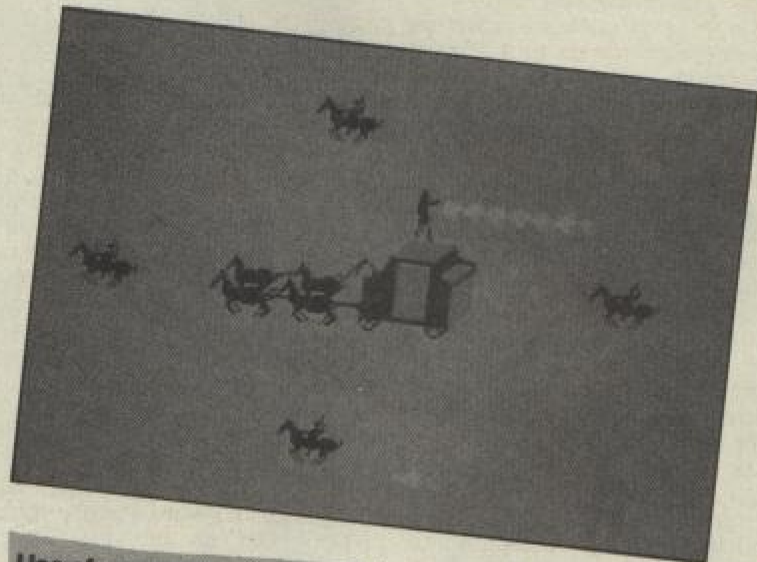
The driver of the San Pedro stage coach has been shot! The object of the game is to get the stage coach under control, collect the stranded passengers, steer a safe route through the treacherous Sierra Peligrosa mountains while collecting the gold, avoid the Comanche indians and finally arrive at the small mining town of San Pedro.

The first stage, called the jump, has you riding behind the San Pedro stage coach and you must ride up behind it and climb on board. Once on the roof you must crawl to the front and grab the reins. With this done you must steer through the desert avoiding cacti and picking up the waiting passengers. If you fail to pick up a passenger they will jump up and down angrily or even worse — you may run over them!

Once enough passengers have been picked up the game moves on to the next stage, the Sierra Peligrosa mountains. Here you steer through the mountains without receiving too much damage. You must pick up the boxes of Gold or ammunition while avoiding the deadly rock slides. All these details can be seen on the map facility.

The last section is all on the indian plains. The indians go into a formation that hems you in while another indian attempts to climb onto the back of your coach to either kidnap one of your passengers or yourself. Your only defence is to climb onto the stage coach's roof and try to shoot the indians.

Stage Coach never actually grabbed me when it was first released, looking at it now I'm not surprised. The graphics are a bit small for my liking though there is quite a bit of detail. Both colour and sound are used well but for me the game isn't addictive enough. Within a couple of games it is possible, on the lower levels, to get near to completion. Overall a pretty bad to average game today.
RC

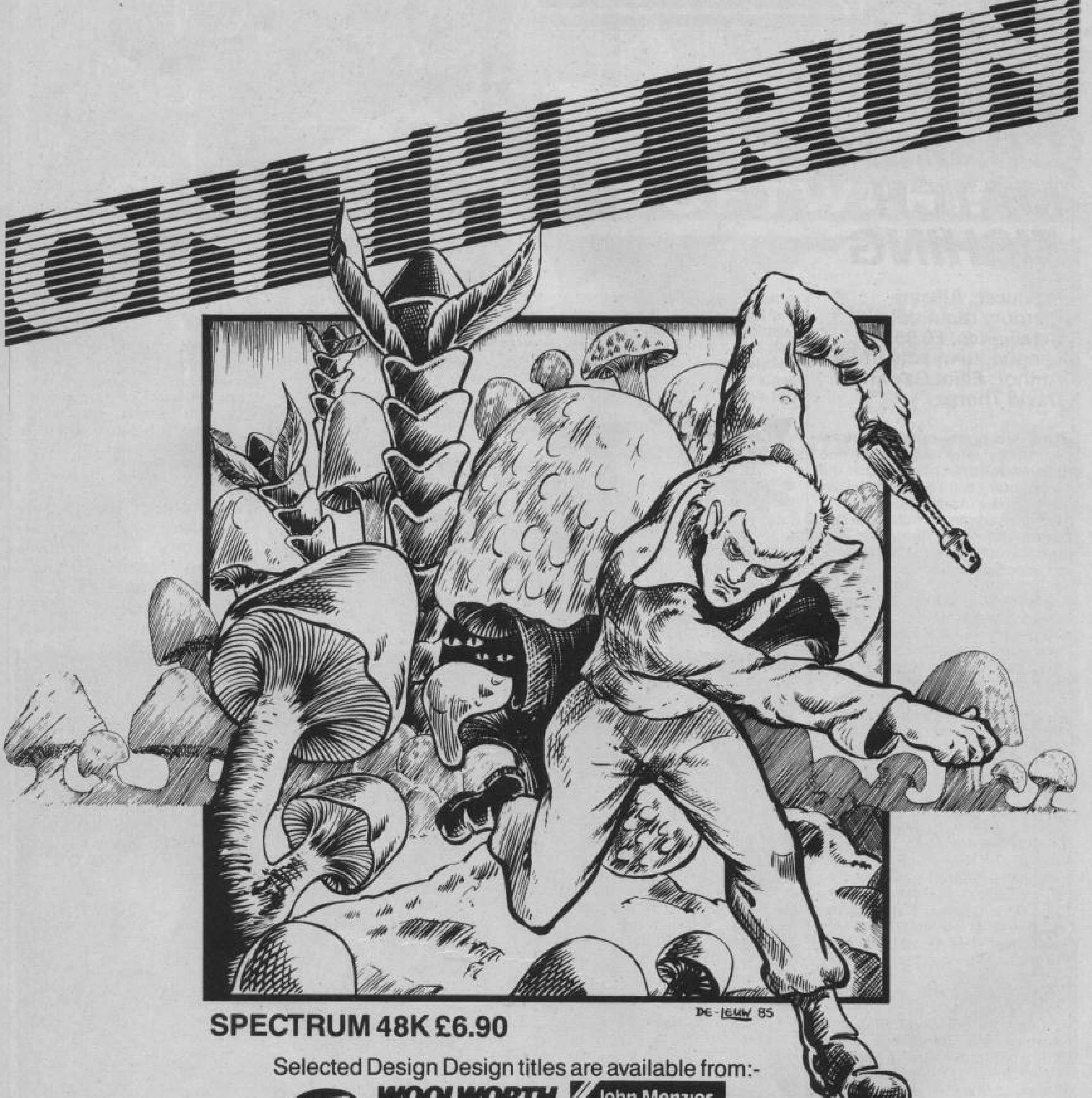


Use of computer	89%
Graphics	75%
Playability	73%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	76%
Overall	79%

Hmmmm, this is a bit of a tricky game to judge, the graphics are poor by today's standards but strangely enough it is quite playable and kept me amused for a while. As with many games the idea may be good but the implementation suffers, normally because the graphics aren't good enough. Of the three stages the first and last are probably graphically the better and the more playable of the three, the mountain stage lets the game down tremendously. I found the game quite playable for a while but I don't think I will loose any sleep over it. To sum up; not exactly good but I have seen a lot worse, let's just say 'average'.
LM

(Rob) Most of the ratings except the Use of Computer and Getting Started should go down by about 10% especially the Addictive Qualities, which should go down by about 15%.

(Lloyd) I agree (this is getting to be a habit!), *Stage Coach* does become tedious after a while and isn't really worth buying unless you've played it before and know you like it.



SPECTRUM 48K £6.90

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Price includes p & p

JACK CHARLTONS MATCH FISHING

Producer: Alligata
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **mostly BASIC**
Author: **Elliot Gay and David Thorpe**

This is a pretty unconventional game by any standards, the player does not play against the computer but against fellow beings, the more the better.

The program simulates a day out match fishing beside a very attractive lake. (Drawn by David Thorpe see issue 17). The game caters for up to eight fisherpersons all of whom must enter their names at the start. The computer will ask how for long you want the match to last and you can select any period between 1 and 90 minutes. The program next allocates each player a peg number and describes in detail the conditions of the bank and surrounding waters. For example, the player who draws peg 7 is told that his section has two large trees adjacent to him and the water, which is only between seven and twenty feet deep, has a lot of leaves and twigs on the surface. To a fisherperson I suppose that this would suggest the use of a luminous hook and a torch but whatever tackle you decide on you must choose the most appropriate from the tackle section.

You are offered a choice of rods, floats, reels, lines, baits and hooks. At this stage you must specify the type of cast — strong, medium or weak. When all of the players have selected what they assume to be the most appropriate tackle we can move onto the actual fishing.

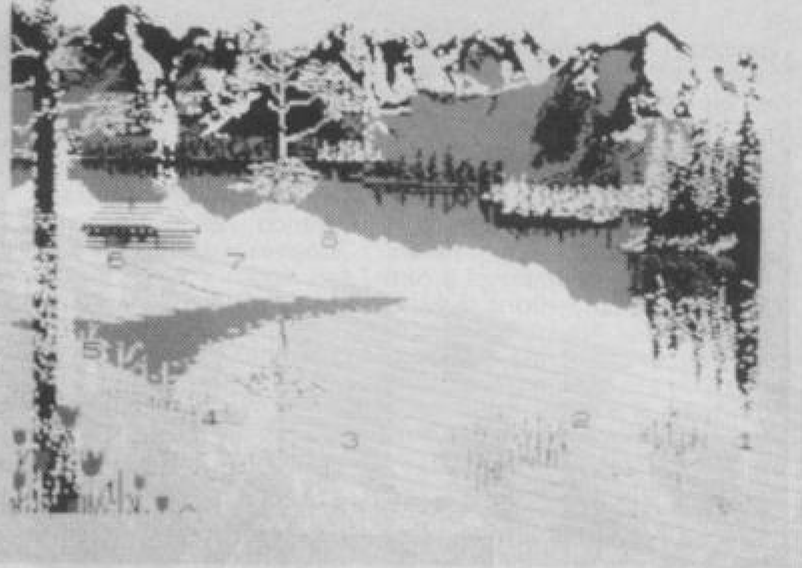
A page of instructions explains that all of the contestants must gather round the computer. They will be shown a picture of the lake with the eight pegs around it. When a player's peg flashes it means that a fish has taken the bait and the player whose peg it is must dash to the computer and press the appropriate number to strike. The picture changes to show a little chap sitting on the bank with a fish moving towards the line, when it reaches it you press SPACE and hope that the tackle you selected is up to the fish you are trying to catch. At any stage during the wait you can ask to see your peg description and change tackle if required.

At the end of the time period the results are displayed. Each player's name is printed to the screen in an order dependent on the total weight of fish caught. Displaying the total weight of fish caught neatly avoids those traditional, arms outstretched arguments about the ones that got away.

CRITICISM

● '*Fishing* has got to be one of the most difficult sports to simulate and I think this program manages to capture the tactical and technical aspects rather well. The view of the pool is superb and it's quite fun just to sit in front of it and relax. The graphics of the fisherman on the river bank are (forgive me) another kettle of fish — a little on the simple side but they are colourful and effective enough. The blurb that came with the game stressed the importance of a group of players rather than just one or two. On the whole an interesting and well designed program.'

● *'The game manages to be quite realistic. You are told the conditions of your peg including details of water speed and light and if there any weeds about. While I am interested in fishing I do not consider myself an expert but the game certainly seemed to pose the sort of problems that any match fisherman would have to face. Interesting for anglers.'*

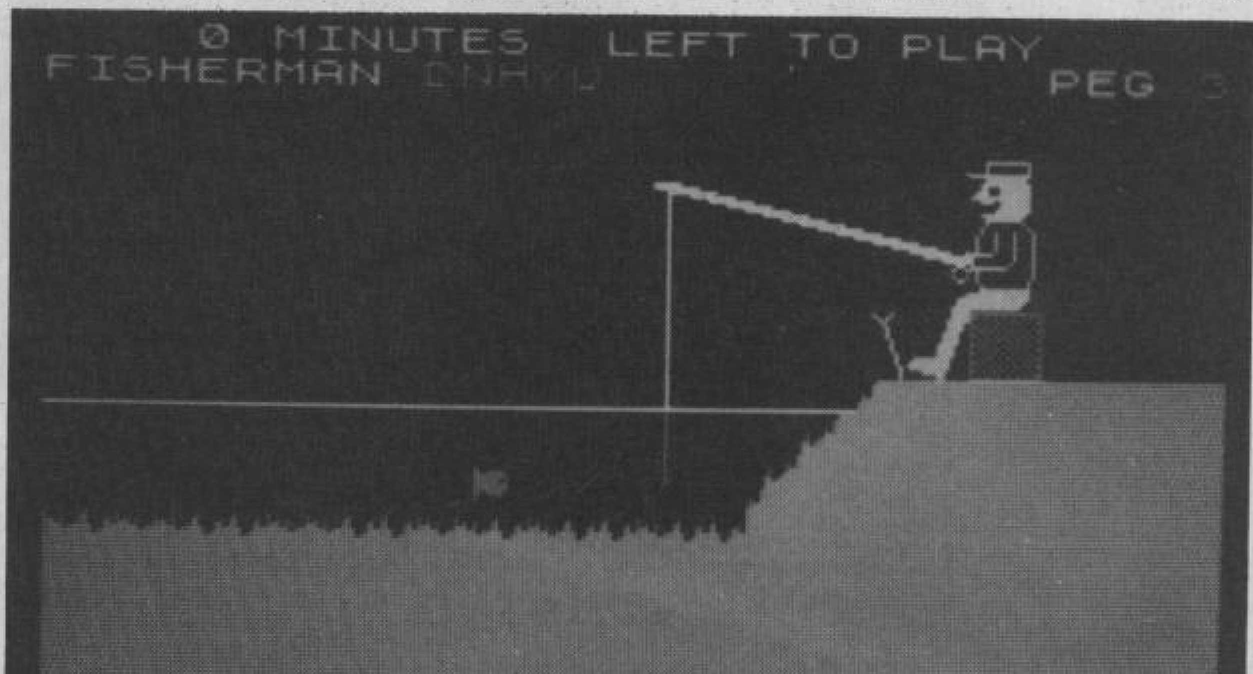


SILLY WARNING
Please don't take Your Spectrum near the water's edge, it could prove harmful and may be dangerous.

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1 to 8 and space
Joystick: N/A
Keyboard play: N/A
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: superb view of the lake, others indifferent
Sound: very little
Skill levels: 1
Lives: N/A
Screens: 2 effectively
General rating: an interesting game with probably limited appeal for those who prefer making a lot of noise on the river bank. Ratings from a fisherperson's viewpoint.

Use of computer	66%
Graphics	75%
Playability	60%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	65%
Overall	**74%**



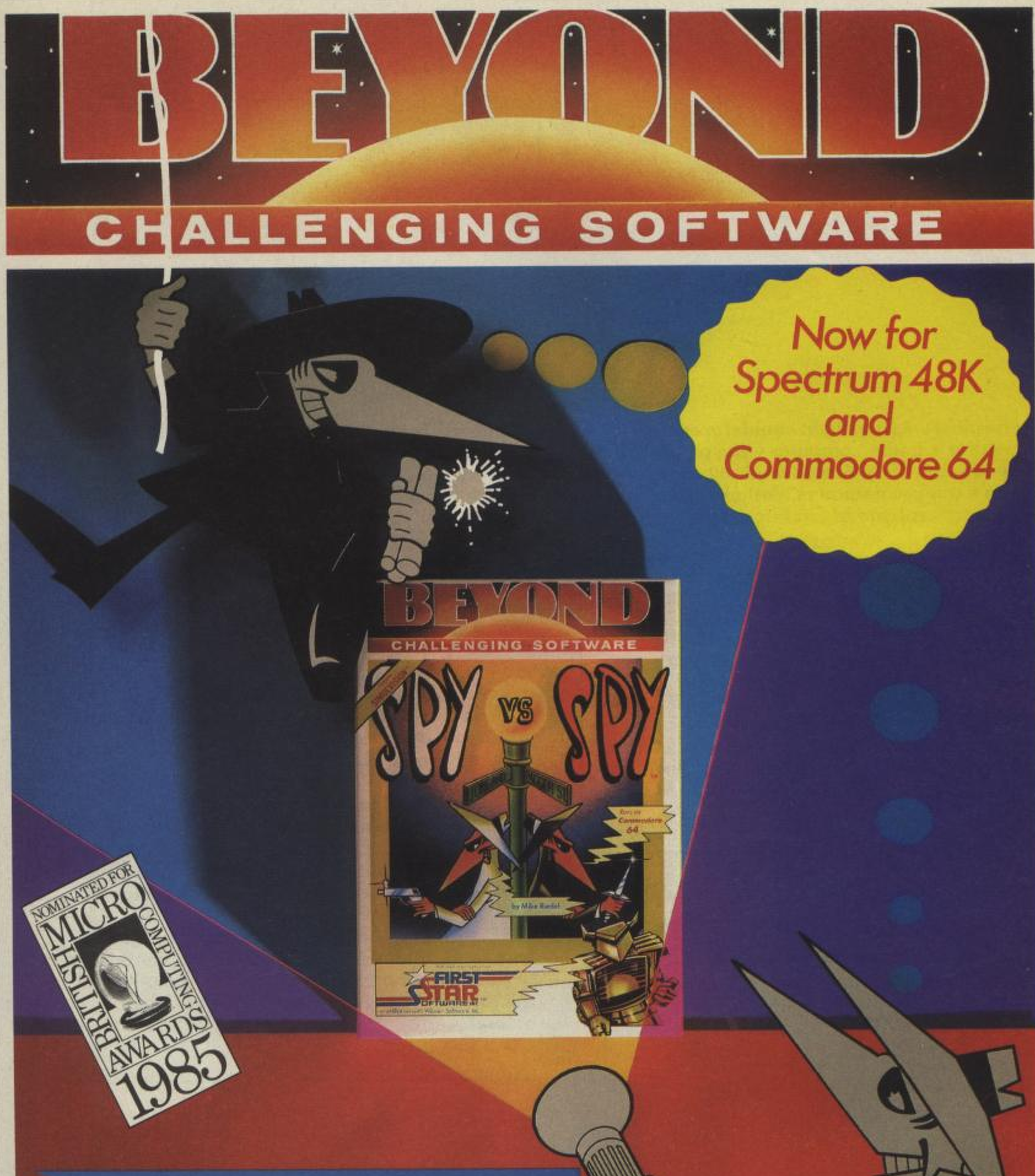
HOW THE RATINGS WORK

IMPORTANT CHANGE!!!

After more than a year of maintaining the CRASH rating system, we have made one important alteration. The **OVERALL** rating is **no longer calculated as a strict average of the previous 6 ratings.** Now each reviewer is independently allowed to judge the Overall worth of a game as a **separate rating**. We hope this will help overcome some of the inconsistencies which readers have noted in the past.

OVERALL PERCENTAGE is now a separate and distinct rating. ALL ratings are an average of three reviewers' opinions.

Under 30% — a waste of time
31-40% — generally poor but may appeal to some
41-50% — below average to average
51-55% — reasonable average if game type enjoyed
56-60% — above average to good
61-70% — good on most counts, generally recommended
71-80% — very good, recommended
81-89% — excellent
Above 90% — a CRASH Smash, words fail....


BEYOND
CHALLENGING SOFTWARE
Now for Spectrum 48K and Commodore 64
BEYOND
CHALLENGING SOFTWARE
SPY VS SPY
FIRST STAR SOFTWARE
NOMINATED FOR BRITISH MICRO COMPUTING AWARDS 1985
Spy vs Spy is two player cartoon fun! The black and white spies chase each other around the embassy.
They steal secrets and plant traps, playing against each other on a split screen display.

Now YOU can fly with the legendary Red Arrows – in the most challenging flight simulation ever!

It's the most exciting flight simulator ever written for a home computer – the product of many months of dedicated work by some of Britain's top programmers, enthusiastically aided by the talents of aircraft designers, engineers, mathematicians – and the Red Arrow pilots themselves.

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But the real drama begins as you plunge into the death-defying manoeuvres that have been thrilling crowds at air shows for the last 21 years.

On the panel in front of you are all the instruments you need – plus a screen giving you an external view of the complete formation you are flying. Slip out of line for a second and the eagle-eyed Red Leader will be on the radio ordering you back into position.

The program comes with a detailed flight handbook that will soon give you the confidence to take YOUR place alongside the ace pilots of the Red Arrows, even if you've never flown before!

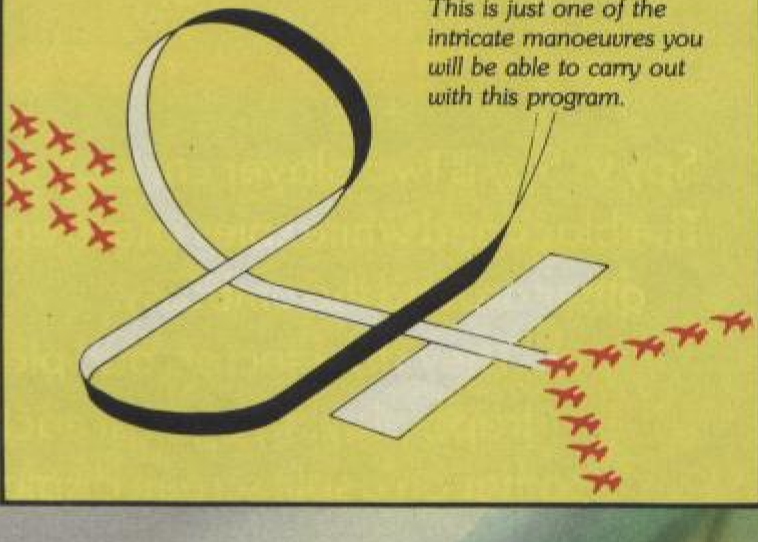
Be a VIP visitor with the Red Arrows!

Everyone who buys a Red Arrows computer program will be invited to enter an exciting competition. The winners will be given a VIP visit to the Red Arrows base at RAF Scampton, the wartime home of the Dambusters. Your visit will include two nights' accommodation at a luxury hotel. And while you are at Scampton you will be invited to sit at the controls of a Hawk.

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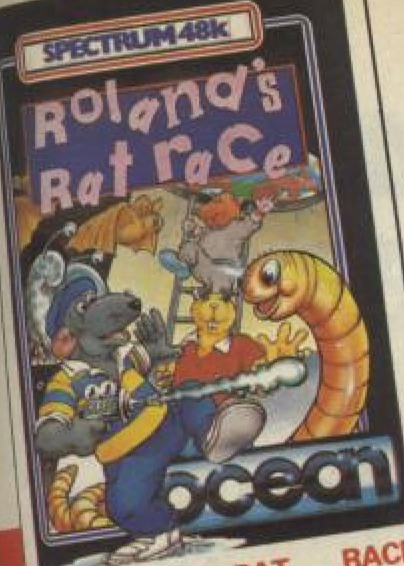
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YOU CAN ALSO ORDER BY PHONE: **061-480 0173** *(24 hours)* *Don't forget to quote your credit card number and full address.*

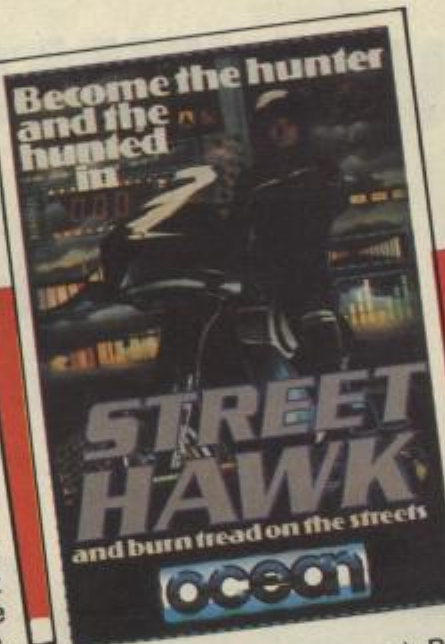
ZAP 7

Put yourself in the pilot's seat of the most manoeuvrable fighter in the RAF!


RED ARROWS
A gripping, realistic computer simulation for the
Commodore
Spectrum
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BBC Micro
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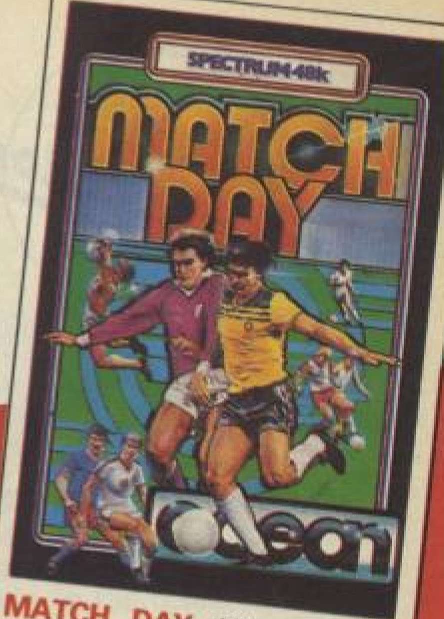
ROLAND'S RAT RACE (Ocean) TVAM's super rodent hero stars in this multi-screen race against time and the enemies of humanity. Can Roland find his way through the sewers to rescue his captured friends, avoid the Rodent World Nasties and still make it to the TV studios on time. Another brand new game from Ocean.



STREET HAWK (Ocean) Be among the first to get the latest game, a fast bike scream through the city streets. Become the hunter and the hunted and burn tread on the streets! Another fast-paced arcade game to get the heart pounding!

BLUE MAX (US Gold) World War I German flying aces were awarded the Blue Max for skill and bravery. In this 3D flying game you must take off and fly a mission against enemy aircraft, tanks and anti-aircraft guns, straffing or bombing vital targets, and return safely to base for refuelling and another mission. Aerial excitement for everyone!





MATCH DAY (Ocean) The best ever action football game on the Spectrum, and one which matches that on any other machine. Play the computer or another human opponent and take part in all the thrills of the sport. An amazingly slick program.



ZAXXON (US Gold) Perhaps the most famous of the great arcade shoot em up games is now yours on the Spectrum. Featuring the original sectors of defence, deep space and the Zaxxon fort with walls, laser barriers, missiles and the rest. Arcade excitement at its best.



FLAK (US Gold) 2096, and your mission as a pilot-warrior is to attack and destroy the sinister Computer Control in your AGX hypersonic fighter plane. But guarding the approach is an array of intelligent FLAK batteries with a deadly aim — to destroy you! You fire and evade and fire again . . . can you take it?!

Subscribe to CRASH and you can choose any two of the games on this page!

And if you're already a subscriber . . .

If you already happen to be a subscriber to CRASH, don't despair, because you too can participate in this special offer. But the offer is only open to existing subscribers using this form and quoting their **subscriber code number**.

All you have to do is fill in your name and address on the form, write down your code number somewhere along the bottom, and send it in **enclosing a cheque or postal order for £4**. Don't forget to circle your choice of two games!

CRASH special offer subscription form

Yes, I want to subscribe to CRASH for 12 issues and receive two of the games shown on this page free.

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

The games I would like are (circle TWO):

Match Day   Street Hawk   Roland's Rat Race

Zaxxon   Blue Max   Flak

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £14.50 made payable to CRASH

Please note that Roland's Rat Race and Street Hawk are not released at the time of writing, so if you choose either of these games there may be a short delay before delivery.

CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

Crash Competition

SKIP YOUR WAY TO
WITH KP AND

in an exclusive CRASH competition



MASTERTRONIC's new release ACTION BIKER features the star of KP's Skips bags, the man himself, Clumsy Colin in an arcade adventure game which has you driving round town looking for a friend to give him a lift to the spaceport.

Along the route Colin meets a whole series of hazards, including oil slicks, other road users and police cars. To help sustain him on his travels from house to house in the town, he can always gobble up a few Skips....



COLOUR VIEWING
MASTERTRONIC



There are 150 houses in town, fifty of which contain items that will help Colin in his quest to find his chum . . . and he can't enter some of the houses because there's no-one in. The race is on. . . .

MASTERTRONIC and KP Skips have teamed up with CRASH to offer a super competition to commemorate Colin's arrival on the small screen, and a lucky CRASH reader will win a 14 inch portable colour telly as a result. Ten whole cases of KP Skips are also on offer to runners up.

To enter, you'll need to invest in a copy of the game, clip out the official entry coupon from this issue of CRASH and draw a map of the game. Send your cartographical masterpiece off to MASTERTRONIC at PARK LORNE, 111 PARK ROAD, LONDON NW8 7JC to arrive by 30th September. No doubt the winner will acquire fame as well as a nifty colour telly, 'cos we might just print his or her picture in the news pages too!

Official CRASH Magazine Mastertronic/KP Skips Competition Entry Form

Dear Mastertronic
Here's my map of Action Biker. Grovel, grovel, pretty please, let me win the TV.

Signed: ____________________

NAME ____________________

ADDRESS ____________________



Letters page heading by desperate art student RICHARD EDDY.

If you're new to CRASH — hello. If you're not — hang on a mo. My editor (blessed be his name etc) tells me that CRASH's popularity is rising enormously, up from approximately 48,000 buyers before Christmas to almost 85,000 last month (which doesn't take account of all you pirate readers)! SO, just to fill you in, this is the CRASH FORUM, compiled, edited and generally ruled by one LLOYD MANGRAM (that's me). I am traditionally underworked and overpai- no, no that's not right, it's the other way round. Anyway, the point is that every month I pick out one letter of unusual merit (that doesn't mean it's the first off the pile either, it's the one that sticks out most after they've all been typed in on my ageing 1922 Hermes typewriter), and this writer is awarded £12 worth of software of their choice. Got it?

The main preoccupations this month fall into three broad categories, more replies (by the sackload) to Mark Roberts' silly letter saying that Commodore 64s are better than Spectrums. Most are unprintable, and anyway, the subject is rather boring; more arguments for and against Alien 8 being like Knight Lore; and even more on the subject of Ghostbusters and its worthiness or lack of it.

The 'BUG BOX' has done rather well, as you will soon see, and the heading on these pages is an example — thank you Richard Eddy (it's just this once though, Oli gets annoyed). If you're a dab hand with the pen, send your entries to BUG BOX at the address to be found at the end of the Forum. I must tell you that pencil work does not reproduce as well as pen, so you are warned.

Finally, before getting on with it, thank you Mark 'Scotty' Scott of Mareham-le-Fen, Near Boston, Lincs for the Christmas card — there's nothing like getting in early, is there — and yes, it is the first of the season.

MY BUYING SYSTEM

Dear Lloyd,
I was surprised to see Richard Harrison's letter in the May issue in which he said, 'who will buy a Spectrum if they can only afford one game a month?'

I am unemployed, and since it took me nearly a year to buy the computer, and I don't belong to a computer club to get pirate copies, I can't always afford even the one. I therefore have to choose very carefully and have devised this system:

1. Buy CRASH for the reviews.
2. Make a note of the games I fancy from the descriptions and comments (I don't always take note of the ratings although a very low one will put me off).
3. See which ones are available at the local shop.
4. Check other, lesser, magazines for reviews.
5. Wait for the next month's CRASH to see the praise or complaints.
6. Buy a game when I have the money.

This means that I don't get them when they are new **but** I can be sure that it is money well spent. If more people did this then the attitudes and prices of the software firms might change. After all, you can often read letters from people saying, 'I wish I had read CRASH first,' or 'I dashed out to buy it the moment it came into the shops and then wished I hadn't.'

As long as people do this and will insist on putting money down for the sake of the title, packaging or the publisher's name alone, then rip-offs will go on. If the public shows that it is discriminating enough to go for quality games at a reasonable price then the software business would have to change. It may mean less games but far more satisfied customers. Don't forget, if the customers aren't happy — well, we all know what has happened to a lot of companies lately. Better still, why not do as Firebird does and have two ranges, at least the price would then give a rough idea of the program.
Ann Smith, Formby, Merseyside

This seems to make sound sense, Ann, and for your pains I award you letter of the month status. I see from your letter that you wanted Gyron *from Firebird as a prize — it's on its way.*

Just occasionally I manage to convince the Power That Be to award £12 of software to two writers if there are two letters that deserve it, and this month is one of those occasions, for this next piece of jingoistic flag-waving. . . .

IT'S UP TO US

Dear Lloyd,
Boom! As I write, the resounding echoes of yet another collapse in the tangle computer jungle are fading in my ears. My local, hardworking and friendly hardware-software retailer has fallen, a victim of the mighty blow of the liquidator's bloodied axe. He is in good company, Imagine, Rabbit, Oric Computers, Dragon Data, the loathsome Big K magazine and of course the late lamented Personal Computer Games. The list is endless. To think that many of these were killed off by mismanagement and inadequate market manipulation.

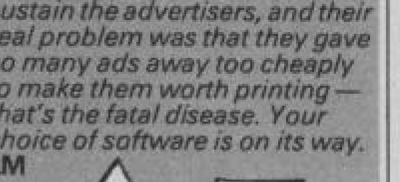
We are informed that PCG died of a fatal disease known as insufficient ad revenuitis. It is generally contracted through poor advertising usage, it is highly contagious and particularly lethal. 'But,' I hear you cry, 'PCG was a hot seller, what happened to them?' Yes, they sold copies and that looks good on paper, but the cold facts are that it is **advertising** and not sales that make or break a magazine. In this sphere PCG was only 30-50% as effective as CRASH because an ad placed in PCG for a Spectrum product would reach, at maximum only 50% of the readership, but a similar ad in CRASH would reach 100% of the readership.

But with so many firms hitting rock bottom after the Christmas rush, how has Sinclair Research fared you might ask? Figures show us that Sinclair made £80 million turnover last year — almost inconceivable in such times of hardship.

Perhaps this tells us that this is not the beginning of a massive industrial domino effect. The scare already had a sporadic foundation in Summer 84 when a notably flamboyant software house faded into insignificance. Are we surprised that Imagine foundered? No, because they didn't produce the games, only hot air. Unfortunately they left a great deal of unemployed people behind them. We cannot close our eyes to shake-ups in the business. Commodore laid off 124 workers at their Corby plant and they face the humiliating failure of the Plus 4. Acorn are losing heavily and Apple are reducing world wide stocks. But the world will not end overnight. The prophets of doom have been proved wrong before. The much vaunted MSX invasion seems to have been rendered impotent by its redundant standard.

Perhaps Sinclair has survived because of the greatly quoted 'fanatical loyalty' of Spectrum users. Nobody, not even Sir Clive, could have invisaged the survival of the Spectrum. It has repulsed all competitors. Even Commodore software pales beside it in depth and content. So the future, it seems, lies in the continued support of Spectrum owners for Spectrum software houses. The market isn't collapsing, it's going through growth pangs and only the best will survive with **our** help; the computer users. **We** have the most important voice in the long run. Don't neglect it! Don't lose hope!
Andrew Cusack (15), Glounthaune, Cork, Ireland

I ought to point out that although PCG looked like a hot seller, it never really achieved the kind of sales that it needed to sustain the advertisers, and their real problem was that they gave so many ads away too cheaply to make them worth printing — that's the fatal disease. Your choice of software is on its way.
LM





SAVE MY ART A LEVEL

Dear Crashites,
Hi, thanks for a great mag, it's really hoopy! I have my 6th form A level art assesment coming up soon and i am in desperate need of some artwork that has some standing, done off my own back. So I have enclosed a new title graphic for the letter page, and it would make my existence so much nicer if you would publish it instead of Oli Frey's usual title. Anyway, grovel, grovel, plead, plead, 24 acne tablets and a spiky hairdo to support! Hoping you will not ruin my future life by not printing the title and so getting chucked off my art course. It's your fault that I haven't done enough work, telling me all the great games I have to cop- er buy, then I have to spend all night to play the game and so get no art done. So it's all your fault.
Richard Eddy (16), Helston, Cornwall.

Okay, Richard Eddy — This is Your Art (up at the top of the page somewhere). There's really no need to blame me, after all, you're not far away from St. Ives and all that arty influence.
LM

MORE ELECTRO-BOP

Dear Lloyd,
I could only gape with horror on reading J. Kimmons' letter entitled 'Bop as you Zap'. Despite his apologies concerning the extreme heavy metal content, I felt compelled to write my own 'Funkers' Version'....
1. **WILD WEST HERO**
Space Cowboy by the Jonzun Crew
2. **D.T. DECATHLON**
Body Break by The SOS Band
3. **ALIEN 8**
Light Years Away by Warp 9
4. **FREEZ'BEES**
Let's Break the Ice by Break Machine
5. **SKOOL DAZE**
Kids' Rap by The Rapoligists
6. ATIC ATAC
Release Yourself by Aleem
7. **TRASHMAN**
Down on the Street by Shakatak
8. **BOULDER DASH**
King of Rock by Run D.M.C.
9. **KNIGHT LORE**
Freaks Come out by Night by Whodini
10. **CYCLONE**
Let it all Blow by The Dazz Band.
I think that 'Pop as you Zap' may be a more suitable title (popping beats bopping any day).
Thanks for a great mag. I particularly like Jetman and the Pokes, and you new column Merely Mangram seems both concise and informative — keep up the good work.
Stephen Middlemiss, Purley, Surrey

EVEN MORE ELECTRO BOP

Dear CRASH
'Bop as you Zap'...
LAZY JONES
Relax by Frankie G T H
RAID OVER MOSCOW
Two Tribes by F G T H
FARENHEIT 3000
The Heat Is On by Glen Frey (no relation)
PACMAN
Hungry Like the Wolf by Duran Duran
LUNAR JETMAN
Clouds Across the Moon by The Rah Band
BOOTY
We Are Sailing by Rod Stewart
GHOSTBUSTERS
Ghostbusters by Ray Parker Junior (what else!)
SABRE WULF
The Lion Sleeps Tonight by Tight Fit
DICTATOR
Everybody Wants to Rule the World by Tears for Fears
JASPER
Rat Rapping by Roland Rat
The other point of my letter is to ask for a pen-pal — not an ordinary PAPER AND PEN PAL but someone who is prepared to write their letters on computer! This way we could swap programming ideas and perhaps work on a game together. If anyone is interested (male or female) please write to:
Grahame Robertson, 56 Pierson Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY11 4UU.
My interests are: Blake's 7, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Playing computer games, Trying to write my own routines, and of course reading CRASH!. Thanks.
Grahame Robertson

Blake's 7!! I think the Ghostbusters *one is a cop out, and shouldn't* Sabre Wulf *have got Hungry Like the Wolf??*
LM

AND EVEN MORE ELECTRO BOP

PIROMANIA
Burn This Place to the Ground by Venom
LUNAR JETMAN
Moonshine by Venom
POLE POSITION
Power Drive by Venom
SPYHUNTER
Spy by Robin George
KNIGHT LORE
Howling at the Moon by Ramones
PUNCHY
Punch and Judy by Marillion
ANDROID 2
The Body Electric by Rush
PYJAMARAMA
So Tired by Ozzy Osbourne
DT'S DECATHLON
Run Runaway by Slade
Culann (Wolfen) McLaughlin (13), Amagh, Co Tyrone

Culann also asks why we haven't reviewed Poltergeist *or* Swords & Sorcery by PSS. The reason's simple enough, they haven't been released yet because PSS ran into programming trouble that has taken an age to sort out. Anyway, enough bopping, popping and zapping for the moment. The dreadful author of this craze, a certain (or is that cretin?) Jeremy Kimmons has written again....
LM

WRONG AGAIN

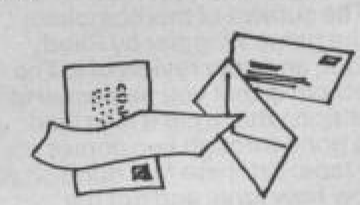
Dear Lloyd,
In the May issue of CRASH you printed my letter about the advert for pirate tape-copiers. The advert that I was referring to in your March issue was on page 119. The advert you thought I was referring to was on page 115. I am pretty certain that the advert on page 119 didn't have anything to do with microdrives as it states that you need two cassette decks. I think that in view of your error and your slightly scathing answer, the least you can do is to print this letter to ammend matters.
Thank you.
Sean O'Flynn, London SE15

Matter ammended, Sean — you're quite right. I must admit I looked badly, thinking you were referring to the Lerm ad. The Microcentre ad for their tape copier has been withdrawn, as you may have seen from the last issue. As to being 'scathing' what else has a poorly paid minion to do but kick the cat occasionally?
LM

SOB STORY

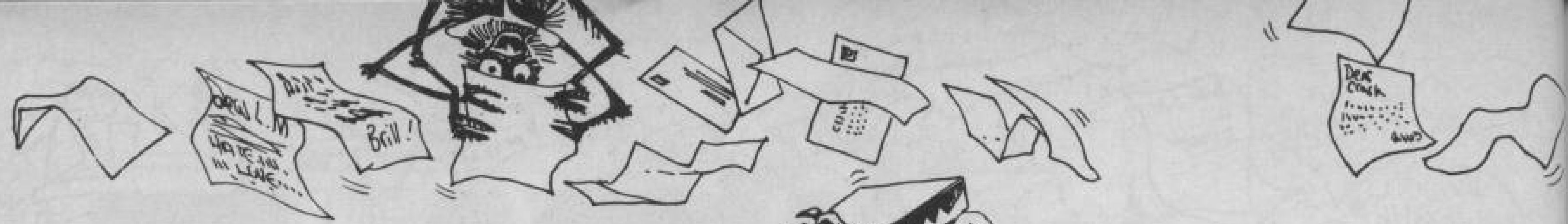
Dear Lloyd,
I do not know why I keep on getting your magazine because my computer is broken. I think I only get it because it is the best magazine I have ever read. More Jetman and more posters please and thank you Firebird and Ultimate for such brilliant games.
Christopher Mitchell, Ballyclare, Antrim

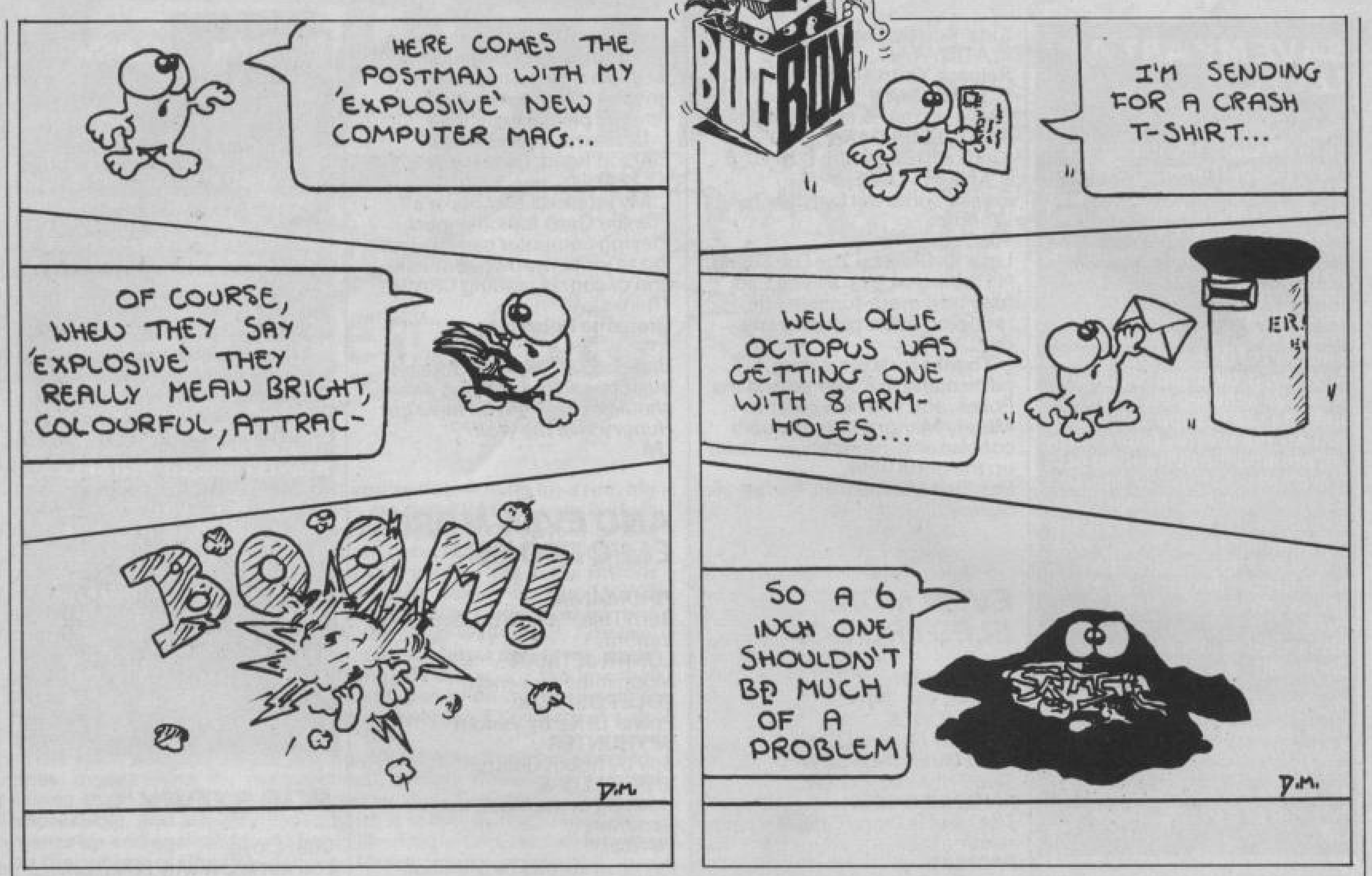
Sorry to hear about the sick Spectrum, Christopher, hope you can get it fixed soon.
LM





RUSSELL LOW's letter didn't make it into the Forum (he's from Ruislip, Middlesex), but I did like the wheedling attempt to get some software....





And here's a chaming little cartoon story from DAVID MUSGRAVE, West Ewell, Surrey. . . .

IT'S CRASHED AGAIN

Dear Lloyd,
Hello, it's me again! (You do remember me, don't you)? *(Groan — who could forget?)* I'm afraid I've got a bit of a gripe to make, but only slightly at CRASH, so chin up, what?

The subject of this complaint is the game *Wriggler* by Randy Robot, and your review of it. The problem is that you neglected to mention what a pig it is to load. I've gone through two copies of the tape, sat there for I don't know how long, and got the game to load a grand total of two times. Now before you start going on about cleaning heads, blah, blah, blah, white spirit drone, drone, drone, once a week waffle, waffle, let me say that the tape deck I am using has never given problems before, it loads every tape in the collection first time across a wide range of volume settings. The problem seems to be that some wally at Amorous Android had the bright idea of getting it to load backwards, as you can see when the title page loads (or tries to). First the attributes come up from bottom right to top left, followed by the pixel data, again from bottom right to top left. If that leaves you confused, then that makes three of us — you, me and my Spectrum. Whoever it was had this brainwave really ought to be shot. So please, next time a game is reviewed, please make sure to mention if you have problems loading it.

By the way Lloyd, you really should learn to add up. In your Creply to the poem last month (16), you said you couldn't give *Alien 8* and *Finders Keepers* because you could only give away £12 worth of software. Well I think you'll find that £9.95 and £1.99 only come to £11.94. Still, it's all right, Lloyd, we understand.

When is terminal Man coming back? Do you need any more reviewers? Will I do? Why is is Oliver Frey so good? Why is Angus Ryall so funny? Has he been sued yet? How did Miles Auckland do *Bugaboo* in 9 seconds? How come *Tower of despair* and *Twin Kingdom Valley* were both at No 9 last month? Why does Robin Candy look like Zola Budd? Is that his name, or is it a speech defect? All this and more will be completely ignored in the next issue or . . . CRASH!!

Jeremy Kimmons, Croydon, Surrey

The versions we got of Wriggler *were not turbo loaders, so they loaded fine for us blah, blah, drone, waffle, waffle. What do you expect — poetry, talent and maths all at the same time! The answers to your more serious points are: Don't know; no; definitely not; he tries hard; he tries too hard; no, but not for want of trying hard; that's what we're all asking ourselves; haven't you heard of equal placing?; they're one and the same; is your surname a misspelling?*
LM

FISHY EXCLUSIVES

Dear CRASH,
What about these 'exclusives' that pop up now and again? I am referring to *Death Star Interceptor*. Computer & Video Games proclaimed it as an exclusive review, but you did as well. Is there some fishy business going on, or what?
Ian Nash, Winyates East, Redditch

There often is something fishy going on, Ian, but it is the software houses that are often to blame. An 'exclusive' is supposed to be exactly that. Mags like 'em for obvious reasons, and the battle to get them has hotted up, which lets some unscrupulous marketing people get away with offering them all over the place. As far as C&VG goes, they seem to say 'exclusive' rather a lot, and sometimes they are even right!
LM

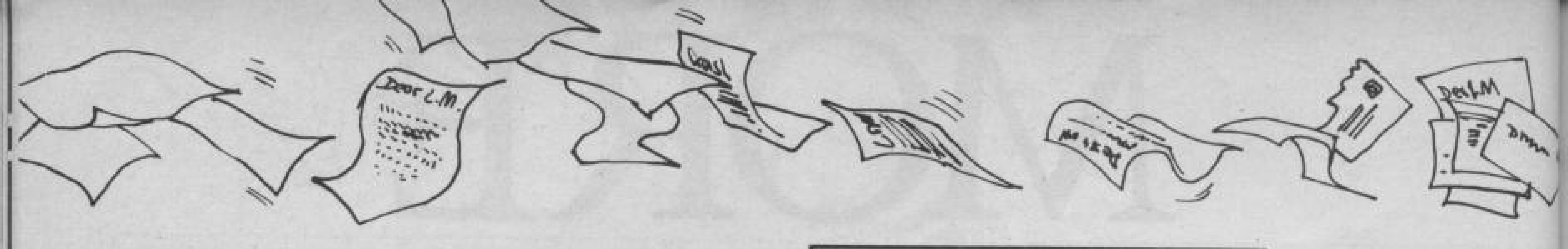
ME PLEASE!

Dear Sir,
I have always got CRASH since I received my computer last Christmas. However, I don't have a subscription and sometimes someone gets the last issue on the shelf before I do.

I have a Commodore-owning friend who got issue 1 of ZZAP! on my advice. All in all it seems quite good. But looking through it I noticed a page saying that if you got a year's subscription, you would receive several US Gold games of your choice such as *Tapper, Spyhunter, Bruce Lee* etc.

Why don't we get these mega-brilliant offers for our terrific magazine?
David Als, Peasmarsh, E Sussex

I think I rather like all this 'Dear Sir' stuff! I can't promise, because at the time of writing the details haven't been agreed yet, but there is a deal afoot for a CRASH subscription deal including some US Gold games — scan the pages to see if it arrived in time for this issue. And thanks for the drawing of a well known figure. Who was it, by the way? (only kidding, it was obviously the painter Van Gogh, or was in Sinclair)?
LM



REDUNDANT COMPUTER

Dear Lloyd,
I thought you might be interested in the enclosed advert from the Portsmouth News. It seems to sum up what a lot of Spectrum owners think about the CBM64!
Peter Chessman, Waterlooville, Hants

I really shouldn't, Peter, but it did make everyone in the office laugh, so here's the clipping . . .
LM



p.m.
SCAFFOLD Towers, 20ft. working height, £68; 6 × 4ft. builders, £110; 6 × 4ft. industrial, £150. Free delivery. — Tel. Southampton 466329.
COMMODORE 64 computer, very little use, £110 o.v.n.o. — Fareham 230271.
THREE piece cottage style suite, v.g.c., rocker, two seater settee, one chair, £150 o.n.o. — Tel. 592847.
BEAUTIFUL Rosewood Veneer bedroom suite, including double bed with headboard, double

SOFTAID

Dear CRASH,
I have discovered a problem. In reading May's issue I discovered a letter by Vina Kelly complaining about the price of *Softaid*.
Vina said that the price was supposed to be £2.99, but the price in WH Smith and other shops was £4.99. Are the shops making a profit or have Quicksilva put the price up to raise more money for charity. Please put me in the clear.
David Yarwood, Preston, Lancs
PS. In April's edition, in the advertisement for *Softaid* where it tells you the included games, you wrote *Kokotoni* **Wolf** instead of *Kokotoni* **Wilf**. Fool!!

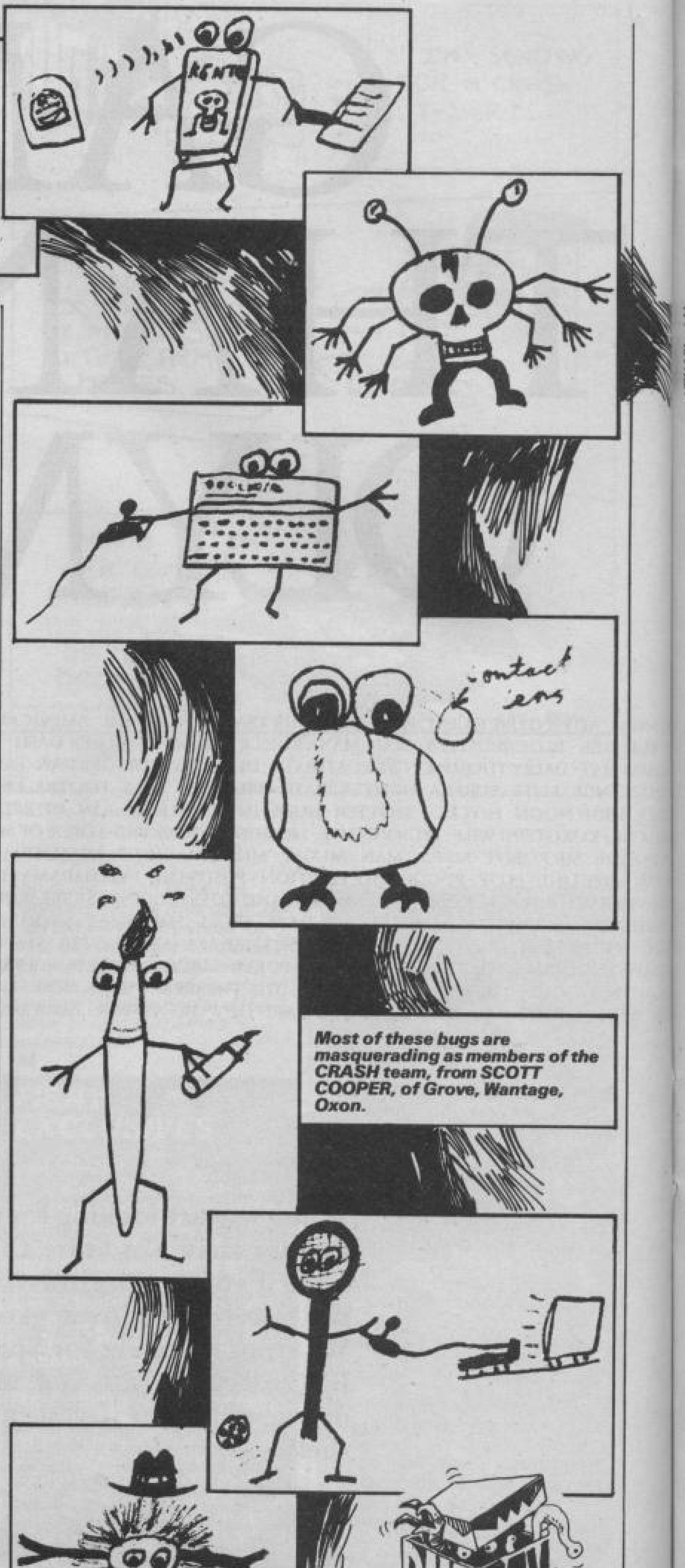
Who are you calling a fool?! Do you think I prepare all the artwork for other people's ads?! Check out 'Merely Mangram' in that issue and you'll see I spelt it correctly. The prats (sorry — publicity people) at Quicksilva got it wrong, and made the original mistake about the price. As far as I'm aware, the shops are the people making the least out of Softaid, *and £4.99 is right.*
LM

ON THE AIR

Dear Lloyd,
It's been a long time since I last wrote to you — you might remember, in issue 2 I was asking about keyboards and TVs, and in issue 4 about loading screens, and also in that letter I was the first person to suggest CRASH Binders (why didn't i get a free one because of this)?
Anyway, since then I've shot to fame (well only in london). You probably know about London's Independent Radio Station, **Capital Radio**. Well on Capital, for the past 3 years there's been a young people's programme called XY2. readers in Manchester might recognise the presenter — Kelly Temple, as he used to work for Radio Halem. On XY2 I used to do the computer part of the programme where i reviewed the latest games and compiled and read the computer news. Sadly XY2 isn't on the air any more, but there will be a new programme very soon!
Since my last letter I've bought a Currah Microspeech unit which I have no complaints about. When I'm using the unit lines appear on the screen which I can';t get rid of. Please tell me if it is possible to get rid of them, and why is it that some games will not work with the unit connected?
Before I go, is there any interface available that will allow me to connect my Casio Mt-40 Electronic organ to the Spectrum?
Karl Flaschke, Wembly, Middx

Hallo Karl, indeed, I remember you well. Those were the 'good old days' when we were all crammed into one tiny office and before the likes of Candyman and Beano Kidd arrived to steal my 1922 Hermes typewriter. I'm also very familiar with Capital (in fact CRASH advertised for a short while on Cap-it-al) and although Radio 1 is a suitable substitute, it isn't quite the same — something you miss after moving to the wilds of Shropshire. Let me know when the next series of XY2 starts!
The Currah Microspeech unit does cause some picture interference when in use, although it shouldn't be too serious. It's important that the TV be very finely tuned to the Spectrum and that you have then fine-tuned the unit itself using the tuner knob. If that doesn't cure the lines, I suggest you get in touch with Welwyn Electronics, the current manufacturers. As to your electronic organ, I'm not familiar with this particular keyboard, but the Tech niche people tell me that as long as it has the standard Midi ports out, you should be able to connect up via Midi interface to your Spectrum. In fact Tech Niche will be looking at music interfaces in a forthcoming issue, probably August.
LM

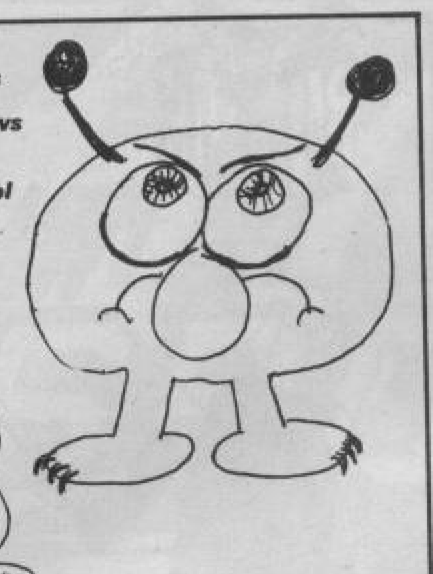




Most of these bugs are masquerading as members of the CRASH team, from SCOTT COOPER, of Grove, Wantage, Oxon.



I have to tell you that this representation of my fair self is quite inaccurate — this guy doesn't look as though he knows heavy metal from a smoothing iron — pictures from PAUL ATKINSON of Crosby, Liverpool





DISGUSTED & INFURIATED

Dear CRASH (Lloyd),
I am DISGUSTED, INFURIATED and generally very, very angry at the amount of faulty software in shops these days. Surely software companies should check their games for faults, after all, we pay a lot of money for new games.
Matthew Newman, Whittlesford, Cambridge
PS. I recently sent Robin Candy instructions on how to finish *Brian Bloodaxe* stage 1, and how to get all 4 parts of the 'Seal' in *Tir Na Nog*.
I was so angry when in the May issue of your fab magazine I saw exactly the same info on both of the games by different people. Do those two people really exist or are you making the names up? The latter I think, because you couldn't think of a place to situate the imaginary character of S. Coulthrust.

My dear Matthew, calm down, or you'll bust a phone or something. Believe me, none of us has the time to invent imaginary letter writers of any sort! Robin receives an enormous bag of mail every day, out of which you could probably pick ten letters saying much the same thing. Of course, if no one wrote, we wouldn't get the information, but it is impossible to credit everyone with everything you know. Coulthrust Esq., might have forgotten to put his full address on (or Robin might have lost it), it does happen. Besides, to complete the imaginary person would be very easy — you've only to think of a town and a country and there are thousands to pick from.

LOGGING ON

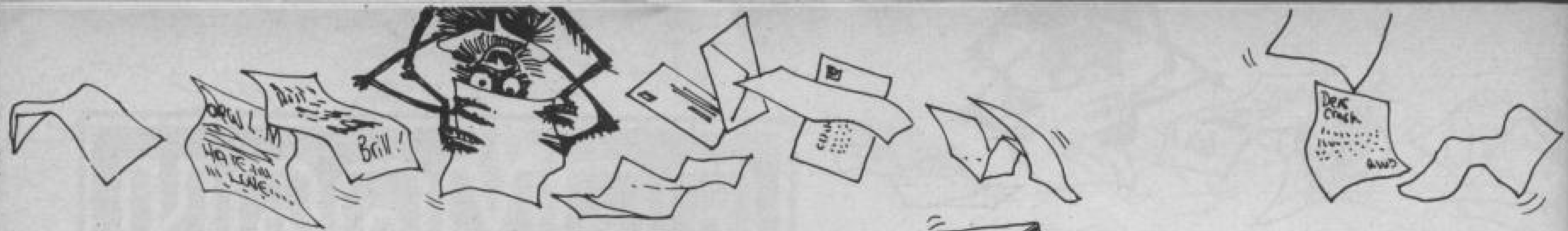
Dear Sir,
Being new to the magazine I wonder if you could tell me if, in the past, a map of *Jet Set Willy* has ever been published? If it has how could I obtain the back copy that the map was in?
Danny Williams, Basildon, Essex

Welcome to CRASH! It certainly has, Danny, in fact I think we were the first by a narrow margin. You can find it in CRASH issue 5 (June 84). To order back numbers check out the ad in this issue which has all the details — it also tells you what other maps have appeared in CRASH.
The next writer also has some similar questions . . .
LM

TELL ME THE ISSUES

Dear CRASH,
I was wondering if you had printed the maps to the following games in the past. If so, could you tell me the numbers of the magazines so that I could send off for them. They are *Ant Attack*, *Atic Atac*, *Gift from the Gods*, *Hulk*, *Booty* and *Zig Zag*. I started a map for *Gift from the Gods*, but every time you reload a game, the map changes.
DR Snook, Benfleet, Essex

In fact the only map we have printed of the above games is Atic Atac *which you can find in issues 6 and 7 (July and August 84) as it was in two parts. It was really after that time that maps seemed to become more important.*
LM



TERRIBLE DANGER

Dear CRASH,
I am writing this letter to warn you of the terrible danger you are risking. Having a look at my May issue of CRASH I feel you could be losing a lot of readers just due to certain aspects of your magazine. I would therefore like to offer some constructive criticism of your magazine.

1. The disgusting picture on the SIGNPOST pages. This is just violence for the sake of violence and does not add anything to your excellent magazine. I suggest a picture of the many other aspects of adventure that are not so horrific. The government tries to protect children from seeing films that may deeply affect them mentally and yet they can pick up your magazine and look at pictures of carnage and gratuitous violence. STOP IT.

2.The price of CRASH has risen from 75p to 95p in a very short time. As CRASH is sold out in every shop in my area 2 days after it has been released, I will probably be right in assuming a big profit is made as this is why you print your mag. Why do you not cut out some unnecessary extras in your mag such as Robin Candy and be the first computer magazine to cut its price?

3. More gore! Your HALL OF SLIME with its heads in various poses of degradation is just not funny, more embarassing.

I hope you can take heed of these points and I'm sure your brill mag will have a very successful life.
Jeremy Connor, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear

Sorry, but this is going to be a bit long! Answering the points as they come; 1) a number of things come to mind, one being the continual arguments over the violence of TV series like Dr Who — all very inconclusive. Another is that I remember, as a child, looking at numerous comics and 'Boys Papers' that frequently contained 'horrific' drawings, and while they frightened me, they also thrilled, which is a lot of the point. I don't know what other aspects of adventure games you are referring to, but I can't see many CRASH readers being thrilled by seeing romantic pictures of Princesses safely rescued, besides which, most adventure games themselves rely on the thrill of sudden death — avoiding it is the excitement.

2) You say the price has risen in a very short time, yet looking back, issues 1 to 7 were at 75p, issues 8 to 15 were 85p (excluding the Christmas Special), so in effect CRASH has gone up 20p in 16 months — almost a year and a half. If you look at similar titles, you will see that they have done just the same if not more so. What you are failing to see in your 'assumption' is that the more copies that sell, the more we have to print, so the cost of printing rises as well. In fact, as I'm sure I've said before, no magazine makes any profit whatsoever from selling magazines since the money returned from distributing them only covers the cost of printing — there's still the production costs and salaries to pay as well as office overheads, only with the addition of advertising revenue is any profit made. As a matter of fact, the directors and original founders of CRASH barely received any real salaries for the first year of its existence — there is some truth behind the jokes after all. As for cutting Robin Candy, well I expect lots of readers will have things to say on that subject, and if you do your maths, you will realise that the saving made on cutting him would lessen the cost of a copy of CRASH by about 0.000001%.

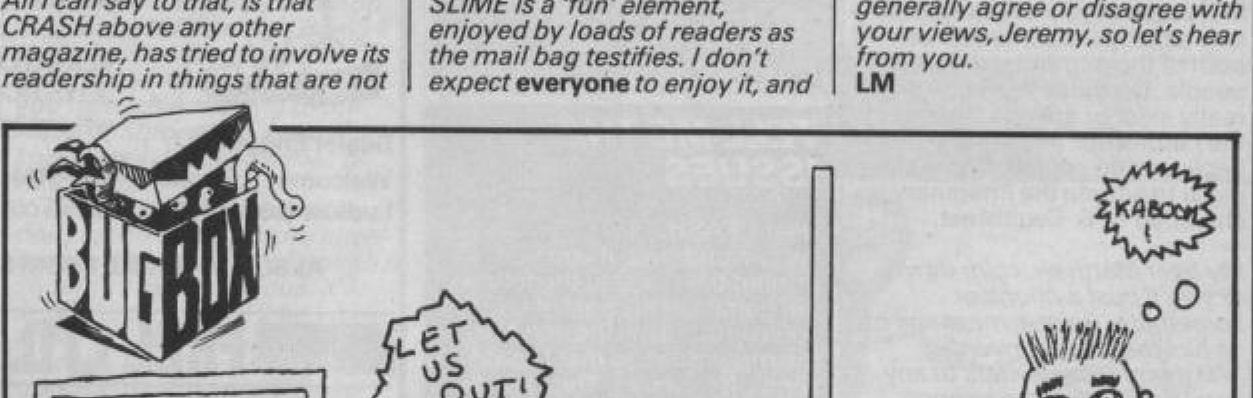
There's another point here (at the risk of being boring), magazines cost money to distribute through the chain — it's done by distributor, wholesaler and retailer each taking a percentage of the cover price (we receive 42.75p of the current 95p per copy sold in fact); if a high volume mag like CRASH was, say, only 60p instead of 95p like most of its competitors, then the distribution chain would be doing as much work on it for their cut and receiving less money for it than they would on a mag with a higher price and therefore a larger amount of money. The result would be that they would refuse to distribute CRASH. Would you want that? You might turn round now and reply, 'you're spouting these figures but hiding the truth that you make vast profits anyway.' All I can say to that, is that CRASH above any other magazine, has tried to involve its readership in things that are not normally mentioned in magazines (and don't have a lot to do with computer games either) like profit margins, printing costs etc. It's up to you to believe me or not.

3) Your last point relates very much to the first. The HALL OF SLIME is a 'fun' element, enjoyed by loads of readers as the mail bag testifies. I don't expect **everyone** *to enjoy it, and if anyone finds it degrading, a) they won't send in photographs of themselves to be mutilated, and b) it is quite possible to skip the page, just as you can turn off the TV.*

However, it would be nice to see whether CRASH readers generally agree or disagree with your views, Jeremy, so let's hear from you.
LM



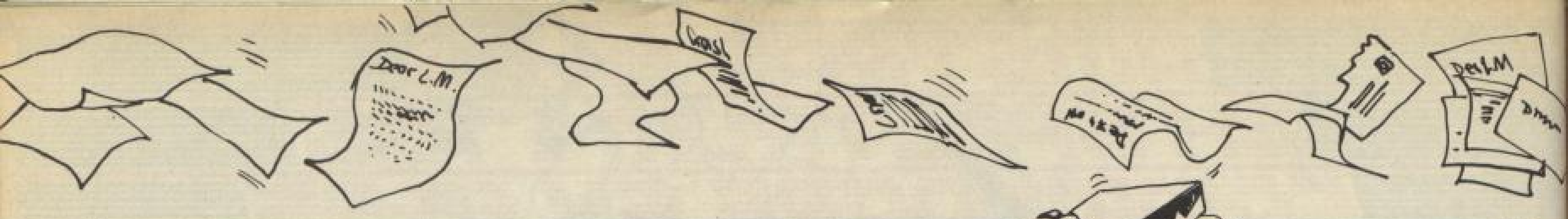
More sketches of the staff, less bug-like this time, from IAN BAILEY, Birkenhead, Merseyside

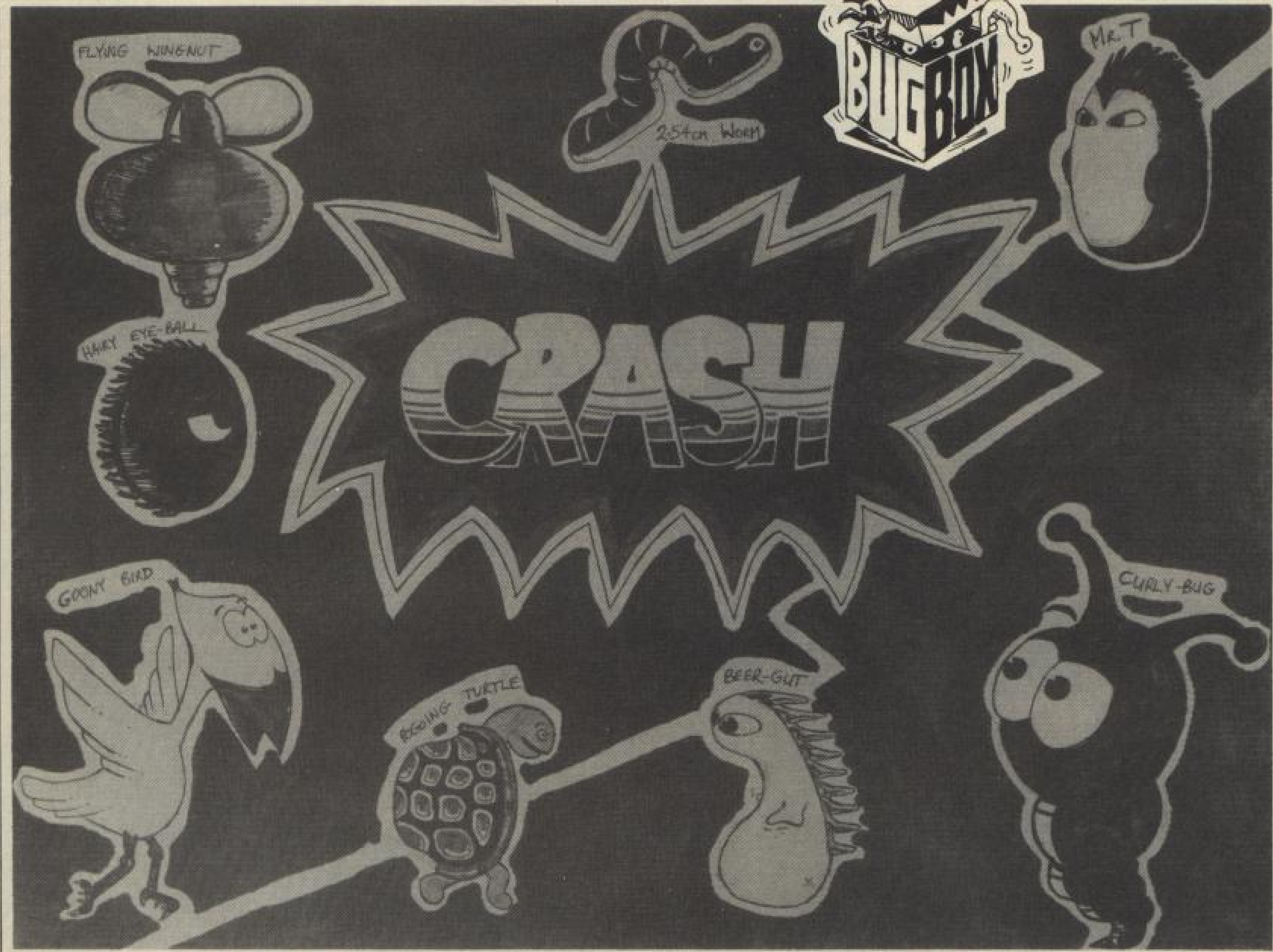


KEVIN DONNEGAN's plea for Bug Lib from Bray, Co Wicklow, Ireland.



AMSTRAD £8·95
ZX SPECTRUM £7·95
COMMODORE 64 £8·95
HYPER SPORTS™
HYPER SPORTS
Konami®
Imagine
..the name of the game
Be only at your peak as you enter the HYPER SPORTS stadium to compete in six NEW exhausting events in this state of the art simulation – the officially endorsed version of the No.1 arcade game.
The screens above are taken from the Arcade version and may differ from the home computer versions.
Continuing the challenge where 'Track and Field' left off.
Imagine Software is available from: WOOLWORTH, WHSMITH, John Menzies, Boots, LASKYS, Rumbelows, COMET, Spectrum Shops and all good dealers.





The envelope that gave the post office such an eyeache from programmer PAUL HUTCHINSON. It includes some characters from the forthcoming game THE COVENANT (Xavior II). Pity I can't do it in colour, then you too could suffer!

THE PROGRAMMER STRIKES BACK

Dear Lloyd,
I have just finished *Xavior II* which, in fact, will be called *The Covenant*. I am unsure of the release date, but a month or so would be likely.

I have just started full time at PSS, and I'm well chuffed with my first job, having failed my second year at University (BSC Hons. Computer Engineering).

My first task was to design a suitable detailed loader for *Swords and Sorcery*, Mike Simpson decided a scroll would be nice for the text window (similar to *Dragontorc*, but with 'bright' used to add depth). The character set I designed for *Xavior II* is also to be used in *Swords*, as is the sound routine (slightly modified). I have now started on writing a 'monster editor' for *Swords* in order to polish up the characters. Mike is close to finishing, whether he does or not this month remains to be seen.

Well (... oops ... Candyitis?) I guess you've spotted the decorative envelope. Eight of the characters in *Xavior II* are pictured (cartoon style) out of the 64. I used to do similar envelopes, as a sort of hobby, and send them to a Pirate radio DJ (several years ago) in order to get a mention on air. Anyway, I hope they have brightened up your mail bag.

What do you mean ... 'pretend to be real readers.' I am, honest! And I'm not writing for free advertising. I am genuinely being friendly and just writing with that in mind. After all, CRASH has been pretty good to me and I get good service mail order-wise. If you really think I'm just trying to plug my game, please don't print anything about it that I reveal in a letter.

Anyway, all the best to everyone at CRASH and keep up the good work.

Paul Hutchinson, Coventry, Warwickshire

... and after that quick word from our sponsor, it's back to the letters ...

Sorry Paul, only taking a pinch of michael, really — honest! The envelope certainly brightened up the mail bag and gave the local post office a headache. It was really bright! It's nice to know that Swords and Sorcery *is still on the way, and good luck with* Xavior II *(that's the name of the game, folks, don't miss it)!*
LM

UPSET BY ZZAP!

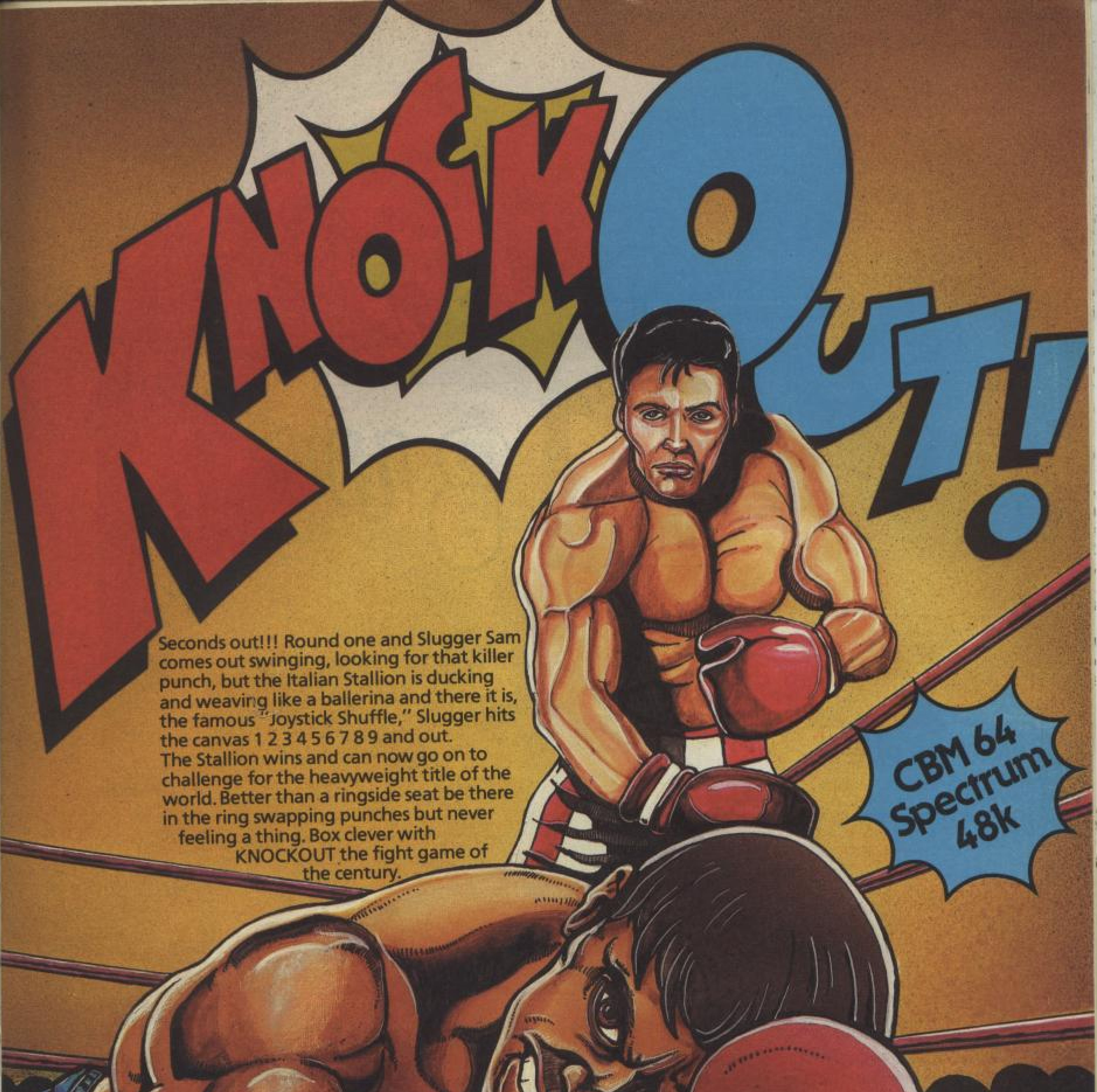
Dear Lloyd (what a weird name), I am writing to you on the subject of ZZAP!64 which has just been released and was originally cooked up by certain members of CRASH to bring in a bit more money — I'm surprised you weren't one of them.

I bought ZZAP!64 for my friend Angus who lives abroad and I thought I'd take a quick look to see if it was as good as CRASH. I was disgusted to read in the first few pages 'The World's Greatest Home Computer' — apart from this not being true, have you lost all faith in the Spectrum, after all you're meant to be on our side. Roger (I want more money) Kean, Franco and Oliver Frey were the other two offenders — 6 of the best is deserved by all three of you.

The more I read ZZAP!64, the more steamed up I got. I felt real anguish at some of the remarks made about the Spectrum which was being slagged off all through the magazine. Whose side are you on anyway — or are you simply in it for the money?

Orson Wajih, London SW8

Magazines are funny beasts because the writing teams (like computer owners) get rather worked up about their machines. The CBM64 is the biggest selling computer (worldwide), so perhaps their is some justification for the offending phrase — besides, if you saw the same about the Spectrum in CRASH would you be upset? ZZAP!64 wasn't started to rake more money in (in fact you would be horrified if you knew how much it costs, certainly some £80,000 before a single penny comes back in several months time). I thought the tone of that first issue, as far as the Spectrum is concerned, was pretty dreadful, and I think if look at the second and third issues, you will find that it has been toned down. In CRASH we have always compared like games between the two machines, sometimes to the CBM64's favour, sometimes not, but we have never slagged it off gratuitously. My attitude (for what it's humbly worth) is that computer owners should be getting fun out of their machines whatever they are and not get worked up over slanging matches which lead nowhere.
LM



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IMAGINE WHAT?

Dear Lloyd,
Last week I went into a computer shop with my cousin Peter, and explored around the place for ten minutes until I came to some old Imagine games. Suddenly I saw a game called *Baseball* from, guess who? Imagine!

I asked the shopkeeper if Imagine has paid off all the money they owe. The shopkeeper replied, 'No, another company has taken over.'

Is this true, or is Imagine making a comeback?
Edward Hui, Leeds 7

Hope I've spelt the name right Edward, I couldn't read it properly! You've obviously not been reading CRASH for very long or you would have seen that Ocean bought the title to Imagine from Imagine's liquidators some months back. The shopkeeper is a bit silly putting Baseball *in with old Imagine games, because although the game was partly finished before Imagine collapsed, Ocean's Imagine has nothing but the name in common with the old imagine*
LM

ANOTHER ODE

Robin Candy tells me I'm not to print another poem in the Forum, because he hates them (gesture of thumbing nose follows) . . .

In composing this little poetic ditty
I felt I'd have to make it witty
To satisfy the need for mail,
And to help you pay Lloyd Mangram's bail
(He hired a computer; never paid the rental,
The defence claimed Lloyd was mental
But the judge showed no mercy for this wicked crime,
And sentenced Lloyd to the Hall of Slime)
And after all, it's you who say,
Send us letters! Don't delay!
So down I sat and began to write,
This poem for CRASH on this dark night;
When witches fly and werewolves howl
And Robin Candy goes on the prowl
Looking for pokes and games to hack
Without these things he'd get the sack!

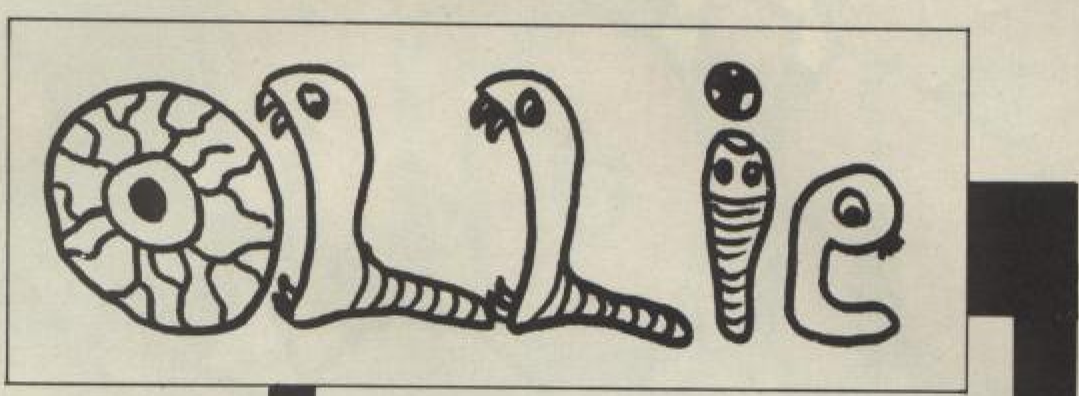
Now listen here young Roger Kean
You're a wally and too mean!
Why not give some more space
To that Adventure guy with the funny face,
With his adventure column, a real booster
To a dull boring day, thanks Mr Brewster.
More of that hippy Angus Ryall
His taste in clothes is really vile
He should be in the loony bin,
All he does is drink neat gin.
And I want to know, who's Ben Stone?
A secret agent; identity unknown,
A Russian spy with a deadly crime,
Sack him now, while there's still time!

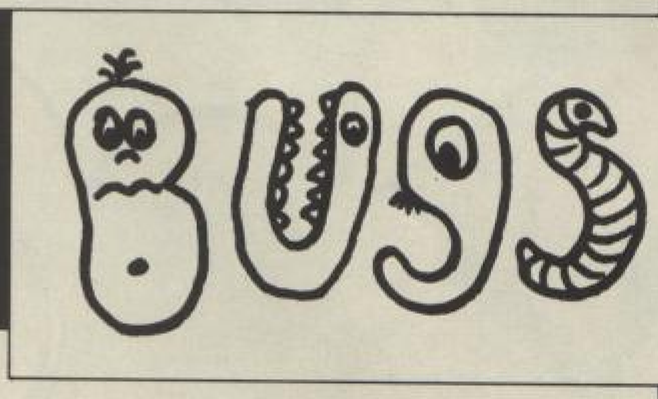
To finish off I'd like to praise,
Your magazine (give Brewster a raise)
It's the best magazine around,
I'd pay anything for CRASH,
even twelve pound! *(hint)*
Stephen Nolan, Walton, Liverpool

I can't reply in rhyme,
It takes too much of my time.
Otherwise I'd spend all day
Writing poetry and losing pay.
Perhaps Robin Candy was right
—
I should ban all poems on sight.

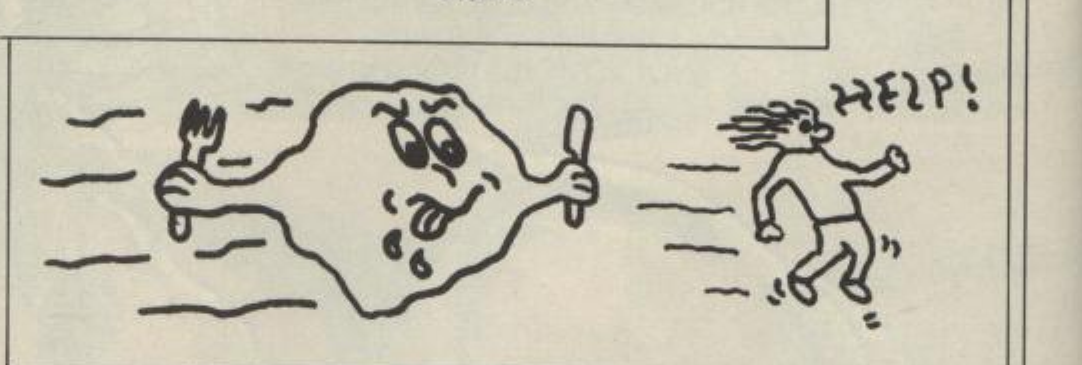
Eat your heart out Coleridge
LM

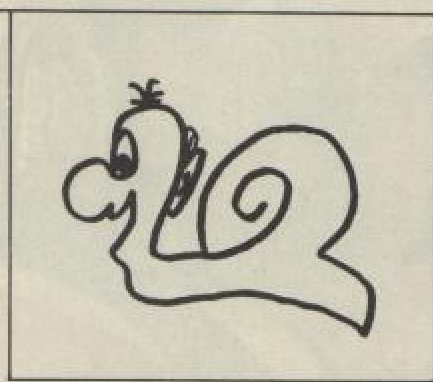












Some bugs from MARTIN BUTCHER, Mirfield, W Yorks.



That's the lot for this month as BUG BOX has to have some room. I'm disappointed that no one has written to me yet via Micronet, but perhaps that's because last month's issue isn't even on sale yet as I write. Address for the letters is CRASH FORUM, (LLOYD MANGRAM), PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

Please note that due to the amount of letters that arrive for the Forum and Playing Tips, it is simply not possible to enter into personal and private correspondence. We hope you understand this, and would rather make the point this way than have disappointed readers waiting for replies that may never come. Thank you.





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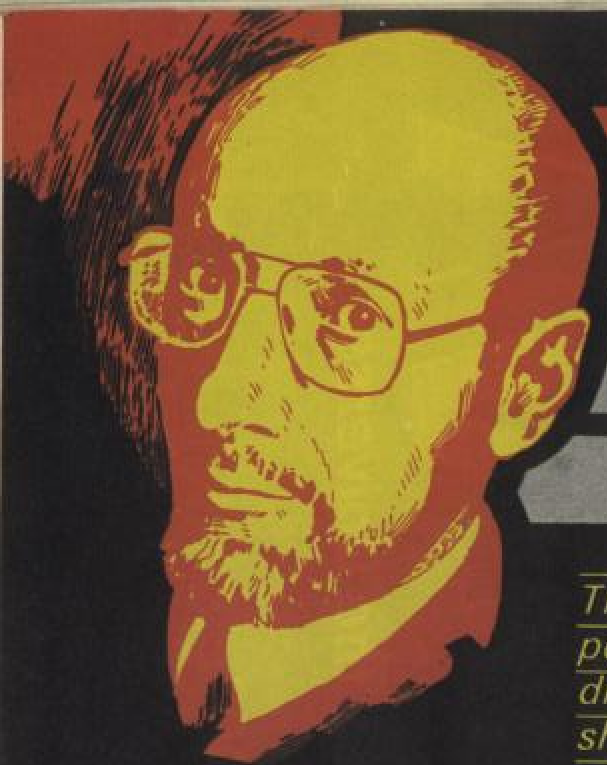
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THE SINCLAIR STORY *part four*

THE TELEVISIONARY

The idea of a portable television set small enough to fit into a pocket has been with Clive Sinclair for well over a decade, but his dream only recently became a reality, available in High Street shops nationwide in the last six weeks. Clive Sinclair began work on the pocket TV in the mid seventies. The project finally came to fruition in late '83, £4 million-worth of development later, when the Sinclair Flat Screen Pocket TV became available by mail order, on a very limited basis. Now you should be able to pick one up from your local store for a fraction under £100

In 1977 Sinclair launched a 'pocket' TV, which **could** be fitted into a pocket, but you had to have a very large pocket indeed — not just to fit the television into, but to take the £200 it cost out of! (about £500 in today's money). The following year the Micro-vision appeared, and although the price was halved, it wasn't a winner and the Sinclair small TV quietly disappeared from viewing.

Development work went on behind the scenes however, and the team at Sinclair developed a highly complex chip which could control all the routine functions of a cathode ray display — monitoring video and audio inputs, checking picture hold and maintaining the balance between brightness and contrast. This chip is at the heart of the Sinclair flat screen TV, handling the processes which produce the picture on its two inch screen.

While other companies developing small TVs have explored the possibilities of using liquid crystal displays — essentially those used on digital watches — and gas plasma displays, Sir Clive has always been committed to cathode ray tube technology.

Sinclair had to develop a new version of the cathode ray tube in order to make a flat screen TV, and the end result, incorporated into the Pocket TV provides a brighter picture, uses much less power and has half the volume relative to screen size to that of conventional cathode ray TV tubes.

In an ordinary domestic TV, a beam of electrons is fired from a 'gun' at the back of the cathode ray tube, through a vacuum, towards a phosphor coating on the inside front surface of the tube. When a point on the phosphor coating is hit by the electron beam, it emits light, and the image is built up on the screen as the beam scans lines across then phosphor coating, moving down a fraction at the end of each scan before starting the next.

A mini-screen TV using a conventional cathode ray tube would be difficult to fit into your pocket as it has to be comparatively thick to allow the gun to be at the back of the tube, firing forwards.

The Sinclair flat-screen TV cunningly has the electron gun at the side of the screen, firing electrons at right angles to the plane of vision. And the phosphor coated screen is at the back of the tube, not the front.

Enough of the technical details, how does the Sinclair Flat Screen TV perform? In Ludlow, where there are all sorts of TV reception problems, not terribly well — but it provides a better picture than the one the colour port-

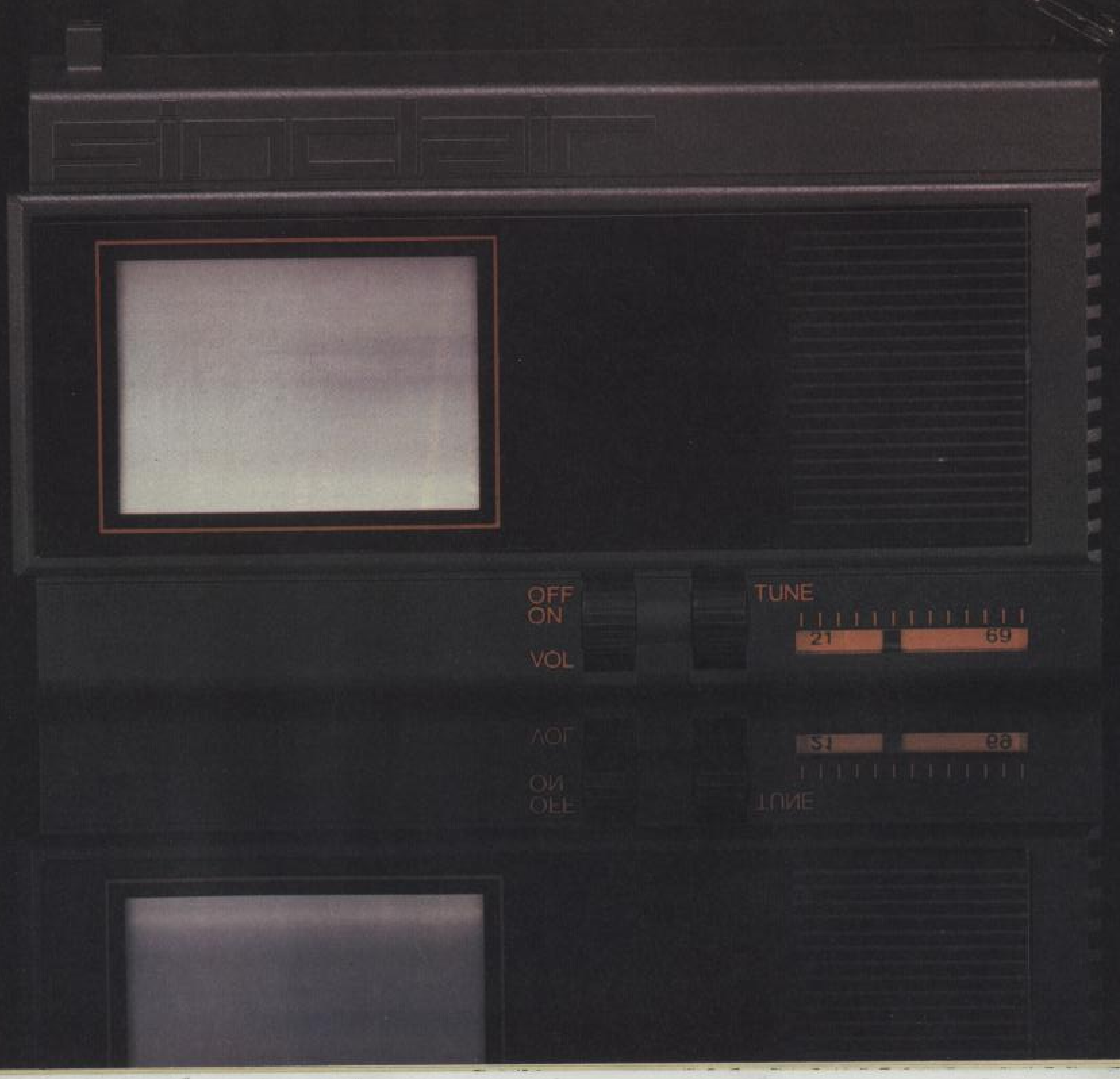


able in the office can manage using its own aerial. The Sinclair TV has a telescopic transistor radio type aerial, which needs to be fully extended to pick up a decent signal, and the telly is very sensitive to its position — a couple of inches movement can make all the difference to the quality of the reception. With a bit of fiddling about, it proved possible to get a reasonable picture without too much grief. In a longer test, which involved our review model travelling to London, it performed very well. Our software editor managed to watch two complete films on it, and caught Barry Norman's *Film 85* in a motorway service station!

No, you can't plug a computer into the Pocket TV; it doesn't have an aerial input socket which is a bit of shame — it would have been handy to have been able to plug the flat screen TV into a more meaty aerial, perhaps the one on the roof for bedtime viewing . . . but then again, it is meant to be pocketable, and you could buy a cheaper black and white telly for your bedroom.

The picture resolution is fine — with a little effort it proved quite possible to read the information on the Ceefax and Oracle pages broadcast in the morning, and while 'Star Wars' might lose some of its impact on a two inch screen, for most purposes the size of the picture is fine — you're supposed to watch close up anyway.

Two controls are provided on the front panel: an on/off volume knob and a tuning knob which moves a linear pointer. Tuning is simple, just like on your faithful



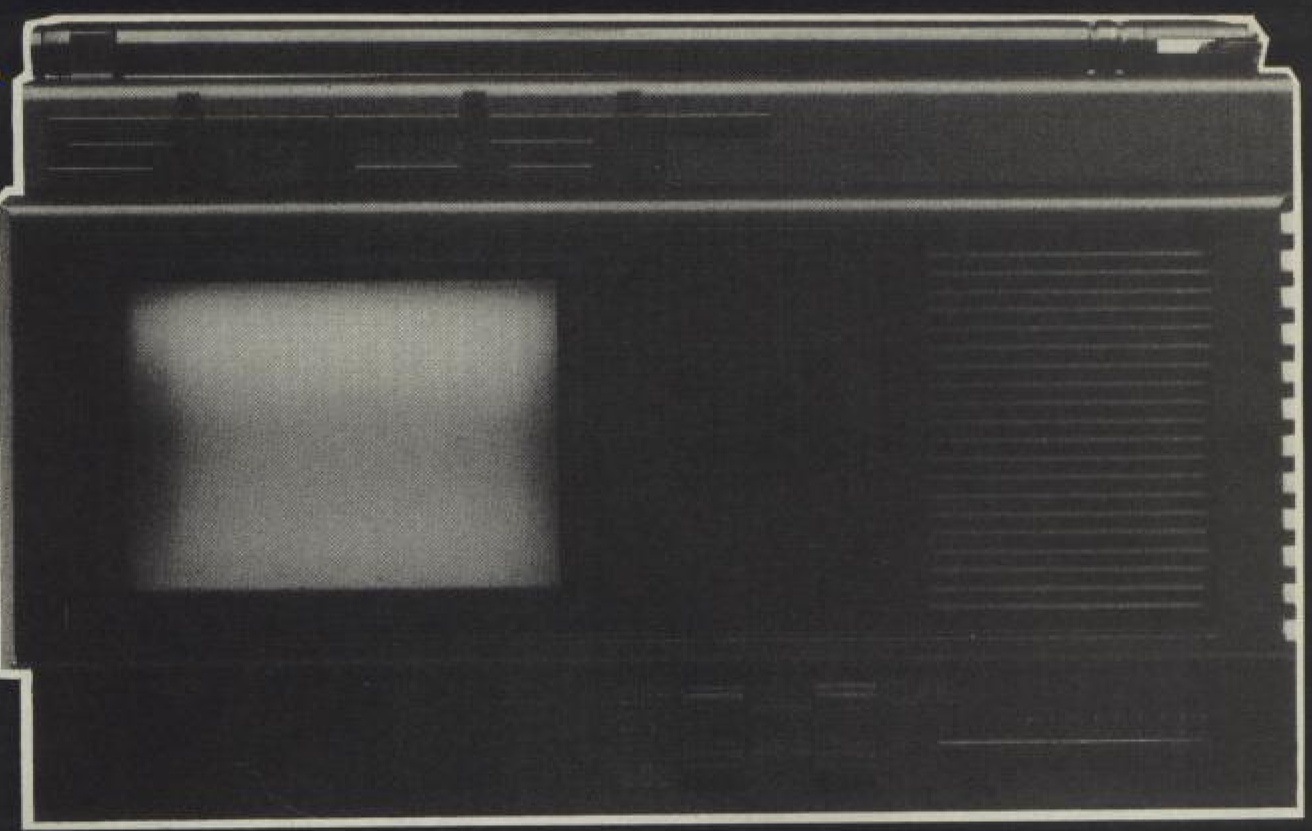
tranny but there's a picture too! While the sound quality isn't HiFi, it's perfectly acceptable and with the earphone provided, totally private viewing and listening is possible.

For an extra £7.95 a mains adaptor is available mail-order from Sinclair, which would be a worthwhile investment if you plan to watch much mini-telly indoors. The batteries used to power the set are flat lithium packs which have a life of some 15 hours continuous goggling, but they weigh in at £10 for a pack of three — could get a bit expensive.

Overall the Pocket TV is a smashing little device, and for £100 is not earth shatteringly expensive. It is genuinely tiny and light. Carrying it around in an inside jacket pocket is no problem — if anything it's easy to forget it is there — and the TV weighs less than many portable stereos.

Without doubt, portable TVs will catch on and may well be available in full colour before too long. Sir Clive's Flat Screen TV is an excellent product, a lot of fun to have and use, and while far from essential in daily life, much more than a toy.

Apart from allowing you to watch your favourite programmes virtually anywhere, there are a host of applications for such a device. It could, for instance, bring a whole new dimension to watching live sport — you could have the best of both worlds by taking your pocket TV into the stands at a football match which is being televised. Action replays on the terraces no less! ●



Crash Competition

WIN A FLAT SCREEN POCKET TV!!

In this Sinclair Research Competition

Three lucky CRASH readers will win a Flat Screen Pocket TV in this competition, sponsored by Sinclair Research.

Soon you could be the envy of your friends, able to 'watch a little TV anywhere' as they say. . . .

We've sorted out ten questions on the history of Sir Clive, his companies and products — and the answers can all be found by looking through Parts One, Two and Three of The Sinclair Story which began life in the April issue of CRASH.

Rack your brains, pore over the articles, answer the questions and send in your entries to TELLY COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive not later than first post on 25th July. First three all correct solutions out of the hat will win their very own little television set. Get cracking. . . .

1) What was Sinclair's matchbox-sized radio called? The Sinclair ....

2) How many bytes were there in the ZX80 ROM?

3) What sort of tape is used in Microdrives?

4) What was The Executive?

5) How many chips did the ZX81 ULA replace?

6) How much does the Spectrum Plus keyboard upgrade cost if you fit it yourself?

7) When was the Black Watch launched?

8) Dead Cockroach? Where can you find one?

9) When did Clive become Sir Clive?

10) What is the name of the ICL machine that uses microdrives?

KERRASH! N·E·W·S I

SINCLAIR IN TROUBLE?

Shock, horror, probe, drama, crisis . . .

In the last few weeks the papers have been full of tales of Sinclair woe. How the company is in trouble over a fifteen million pound overdraft, how the bottom is falling out of the home computer market and how the people making the C5 have gone back to assembling washing machines.

The Sun has to win the spot prize for grossest incompetence, for describing the C5 as an 'open topped, battery-powered four wheeler' under a banner headline of 'SINCLAIR TRIES TO SELL OFF C5 TRIKE'. Well done lads, keep on taking the photos of naked ladies. It's what you're good at. . . ..

The official line from Sinclair, reported in the Financial Times, was that the company was aiming to raise £10 to £15 million 'to fund long-term growth and restructuring plans'.

It's clear that Sinclair Research is experiencing some financial difficulties. £30 million pounds worth of stocks are being held, and Thorn EMI and Timex have extended credit to Sinclair to aid cash flow problems. Two and half million pounds have been written off by Sinclair Research as a result of the price cuts made after Christmas in combination with returns, and a further million pound loss was incurred by the demise of Prism - which apparently caused such major problems to the company, that Sinclair is still trying to work out quite what went where.

Ten percent of Sinclair Research was sold to shareholders a couple of years ago for 13.5 million, and even the most mathematically untalented could work out that the share sale valued the whole company at £135 million. Recently a report in The Guardian placed a value of £20 million on the whole company.

Problems with the QL can't have helped the predicament that the City now feels Sinclair is in. It seems that components for 50,000 QL's were ordered before prototyping, and somewhere in the vaults of Sinclair Research there are presumably 50,000



Sir Clive Sinclair

little batteries that were once intended to provide back-up to the internal QL clock. And there are probably quite a few 128K chips going spare for similar reasons, which may have prompted recent speculation about a 128K Spectrum.

Not so daft, really, given that Sinclair Research may well have a significant quantity of suitable silicon lying around. 128K of paged RAM wouldn't require a vast investment in time or money: the TMS2068 had paging ROM and RAM can be paged in the same way. And remember, Interface 1 pages the ROM. . . .

Admittedly, the Spectrum BASIC interpreter uses 16 bit pointers, which means the maximum amount of RAM that can be addressed in BASIC is 64K, but such problems could be avoided in machine code.

Word has also reached us of the LC-3, 'the ZX84 that never was'. Apparently the LC-3 was an abandoned Sinclair prototype which ran on the Z80 processor, like the Spectrum, and had a QDOS ROM, which meant that QL software could be compiled down to run on it as all the system calls were the same. With a built-in, double mapped screen (which meant that 1 byte, rather than the Spectrum's 8, is needed to display a character), and a microdrive the LC-3 could have, and who knows, could well still catch on.

And one shouldn't forget that the Pocket TV is out and about— over 1,000 independent dealers have taken it on, and Dixons are currently doing a whizzo deal, packaging a Pocket TV, Spectrum Plus and 6 games, and ZX Printer. Yes ZX Printer . . . all that lot for £199.00

Meanwhile the rumours are still flying: is Sir Clive trying to raise cash by selling Sinclair Vehicles? Will he raise £15 million from the City, which is populated by 'sheep' as one high powered accountant recently put it 'who follow each other blindly, evēn if it means pushing someone over a cliff'? Speculation is, as usual, rife, but the official Sinclair line as we write is that Sir Clive is not about to step down, and is looking to raise money for further development work.

All, no doubt will be revealed shortly in the continuing saga of manic panic in the microcomputer industry. . . .

NOT SO MUCH A SHORTAGE . . . MORE A RACE?

A mole gets in touch, muttering darkly about there only being two machines in the whole world capable of making blank microdrive cartridges. The conversation continues, and we are told that when the order was given by some financial wizard to cut back on QL production at Chateau Sinclair, the microdrive cartridge manufacture was also cut back, demonstrating a slight lack of understanding, given that the price had just been cut drastically.

Was our mole accurate? We rang Terry Blood Distribution, announcing that we were from CRASH and learn that no, there isn't really a shortage. 'We've sold 518 4-packs today, and still have 212 in stock, and we've currently got 111 of the 100-packs for software houses . . . they do tend to come in and go out very quickly, and some people are being greedy. If we receive a cheque with an order, once the cheque's cashed we have an obligation to fill it as quickly as possible, but no, there's not a shortage. They just come in and go out quickly'. Thank you very much we say, and have a little chat about life, the universe and CRASH before ending the conversation.

Being trained in the art of investigative journalistic practices, we then telephone TBD again, this time asking for 'Sales' and enquiring about the availability of microdrive cartridges from the point of view of a customer. The lady (this time) explains that they have got the cartridges in stock today, but the chances are that the remaining 4-packs will have gone within 24 hours. 'They're difficult to get hold of,' she says, 'If you place an order, we'll put it on hold and you might have to wait up to two and a half weeks'. Hmmm.

A similar 'phone call to Lightning elicits the information that they only sell the single cartridges, and that they do have stocks at present. 'If you want to place an order I'd do it very quickly', the lady says, 'people do order hundreds at a time'. Double Hmmm.

But then there has been a heavy demand, occasioned partly by the price reduction and by the need for microdrive cartridges for the QL application packages produced in languages other than English for the export market. Spanish, for instance . . . and translations for ten other languages are well under way. So, one supposes, our mole was sort of right.

ZX Microdrive Cartridges



N·E·W·S



SCREEN SHUFFLE

Oops time again. For reasons which will no doubt remain a mystery, unsolved for eons, Art went and plonked a loading screen drawn up by a chap called **Graham Lucas** in the **On The Cover** feature in issue 17. This wouldn't in itself have caused too much of a problem, except the feature was on David Thorpe.

For another unaccountable reason, the overworked and underpaid relatives of Lloyd Mangram who have to do our colour separations made a little boo-boo too, and got the colours on that particular loading screen picture out of kilter.

To put the record straight, Graham Lucas is starting up as a loading screen designer on the Spectrum and a jolly nice job he does too, judging by his rendition of the cover of CRASH issue numero uno. Anyone who wants to contact him to offer work, encouragement or Rolls Royces may do so on **Plymouth 893121**.

Sorry Graham. Sorry David.

LICENCE GAZUMPING

The battle for grabbing licences to produce games is hotting up, the latest round of deals with Spanish software house **Dinamic** having caused considerable confusion between Gremlin Graphics and Silversoft/CRL. As Lloyd Mangram reports in 'Merely . . .', both companies are planning to release games licenced from Dinamic, but what he doesn't say is that Silversoft thought they had an agreement with the Spaniards to release not only *Saimazoom* and *Baba Liba* but also *Rocky* and *Profanation*. An agreement was thought to have been reached only a matter of days before **Ian Stewart** of Gremlin Graphics announced that he had effectively 'gazumped' Silversoft on the latter two games. **Ian Ellery**, Software Development Manager for the CRL Group which is 'affiliated' to Silversoft, said that he was disappointed in the turnabout and surprised, since they had had a long association with Dinamic.

With competition becoming so ferocious, running a software house begins to look more like an arcade game every day . . .

TRIO OF SMASHERS!

Slaving away over hot Spectrum keyboards, many miles away from Ludlow, is a trio of programmers. **Ian Morrison**, **David Anderson** and **Robin Muir** have between them achieved no less than three consecutive CRASH SMASHES, with their conversions for the US Gold/ Imagine labels.

First off, their conversion of *Raid Over Moscow* for the Spectrum was a Smash. Then followed *World Series Baseball*, and last but by no means least, *Tapper*.

Unfortunately, we credited Robin Muir and Ian Robinson as the programmers on *World Series*, which was a bit unfair as while Robin did the the music, David Anderson and Ian Morrison were really the main men behind the programming.

Now we learn that up in the Highlands all the avid CRASH readers won't believe Ian Anderson when he tells them that we made a mistake. Well folks, this bunch of sassenachs did slip up on the credits and we're sorry.

And they sound like a bunch of interesting fellows — I mean, three CRASH Smashes on the trot, that's got to be a first. Maybe we'll get to interview them next issue. . . .

Software Editor JEREMY SPENCER is turned from an adventure game novice into an iconoclastic super spy by

THE

CRASH is the first proper magazine to get a look at the completed version of the new epic adventure *The Fourth Protocol*. For the purposes of this article I am not reviewing the game, that's down to Derek Brewster next month. All I want to do is explain the plot and the use it makes of icons.

Icons are a far better form of man-machine interface than is generally found with role playing games simply because the gameplay becomes so much easier and offers a wider appeal than the more usual adventure text input.

The game is based on Frederick Forsythe's book of the same name which details the exploits of MI5 agent John Preston. Preston's task is to foil Russian agents from carrying out Plan Aurora. The fiendish Russkies have cooked up a scheme that is in contravention of one of the four secret protocols appended to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. The fourth of these protocols was an agreement between the USSR, USA and UK that none would introduce a nuclear device by covert means into the territory of any other nation. Having behaved themselves for nearly twenty years the Russians are now prepared to escalate the current tepid war because they feel plan Aurora would bring about the fall of the NATO alliance.

The plan is simple, horribly so. Smuggle a nuclear device into Britain close to a USAF base and set it to go off a week or so prior to a general election; then use lavish disinformation techniques to persuade the population that the ensuing destruction was the fault of our American allies and their reckless behaviour. The suffering and shock caused by the devastation would move the public to such a degree that a left wing anti-nuclear anti-American government would be elected. As a result, the NATO alliance would collapse and the Russians would be free to shop at Marks and Spencers en masse.

The game is divided into three parts; *Nato Documents*, *The Bomb* and *The SAS Assault. As a code is demanded to start the second and third stages, the games must be played in correct order. The first two games allow the player to input information using icons. The main display looks rather like those smart office Macintoshes, each command being represented by a sensible picture, simply select the appropriate picture and that command is invoked. For example, the use of the phone icon; when the hand is moved to the phone a sub menu appears that in turn displays three more icons. The first allows you to pick up and answer it, the second lets you make a call (type in the phone number), and the third returns you to the main display. All the other icons work in the same way.*

The sub icons allows for great flexibility and ease of use — all told it's a lot better and more fun than typing in instructions.

THE NATO DOCUMENTS

These papers are very secret and it is clear they had been in the possession of an unauthorised person. Preston must find out how these papers where leaked and to whom, followed by a quick 'why?' The scene is Preston's office and the icons deal with the input and sorting of information. The **Cencom** icon offers access to your files (throughout the game you will be storing information for collation at a later time and this is where you do it).

The **Assessment** icon gives you an idea of your progress, it tells you how much of the first stage you have solved and what the MI5 bigwigs think of your performance. If you make a bad decision then your rating will plummet but you may be able to backtrack and make good again. Using **Surveillance** you can assign 'watchers' to targets, these snoopers providing valuable information all of which will be brought to your attention via the **Sitreps** icon. The **Calendar** icon lets you know how much time has passed. The **Telephone** icon is pretty neat — answer it before the caller rings off otherwise you will never know what you have missed. **Utilities** takes you to the game save feature.

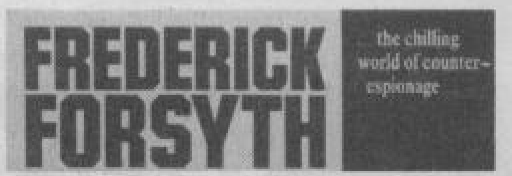
The information gleaned from these different sources provides you with the means to solve your first problem and thus progress to the next stage.

THE BOMB

By now you are on the trail of the bomb. You have an idea about the plot and even who could be responsible. The gameplay is similar to the first except Preston is mostly out of his office which requires additional icons for movement orders and a **Manipulate** icon for **search**, **examine** and **use** objects. The **Communicate** icon allows you to talk to others, via the phone if need be.

SAS ASSAULT

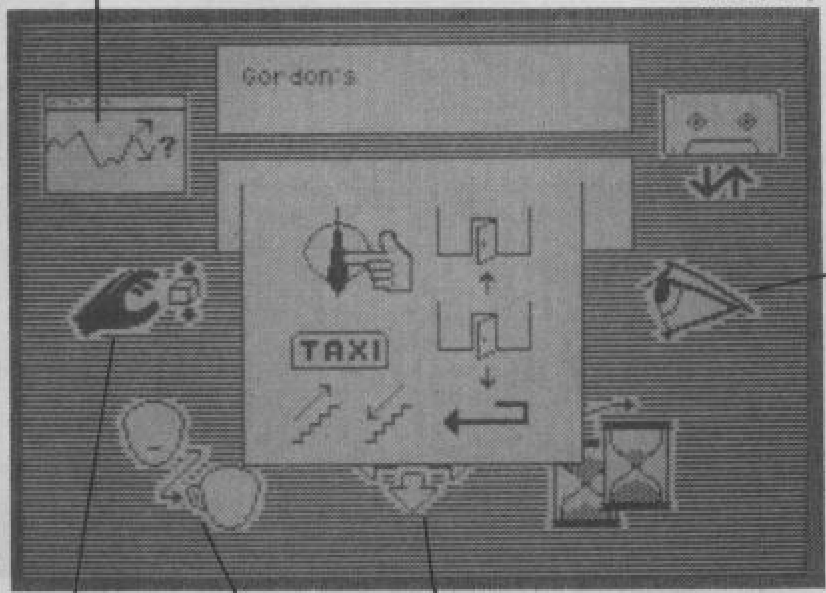
This is the final part. At this stage you have discovered the bomb's location. Using the information gleaned from the two previous game you must work out how to use your SAS force to get rid of

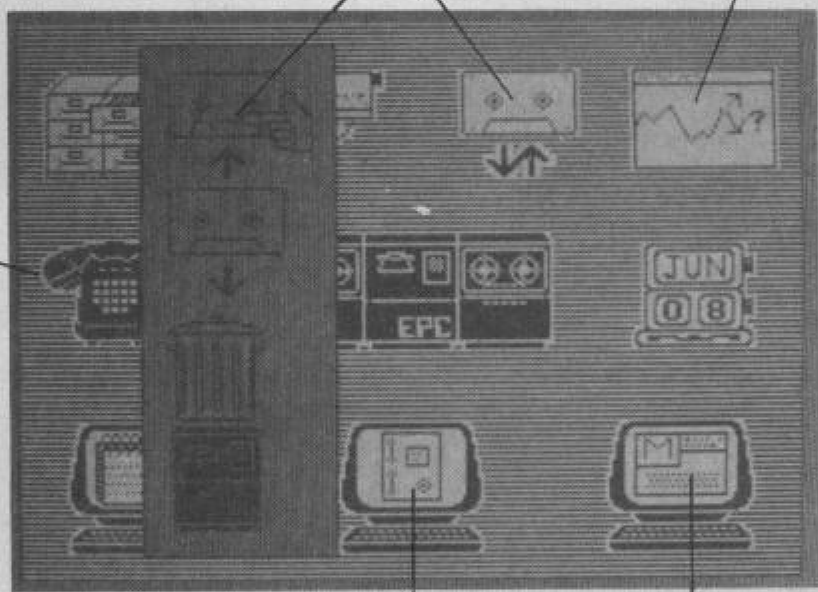


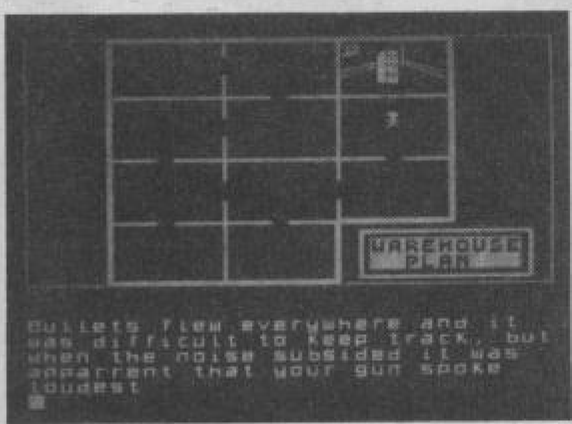
E FOURTH PROTOCOL



THE BOMB

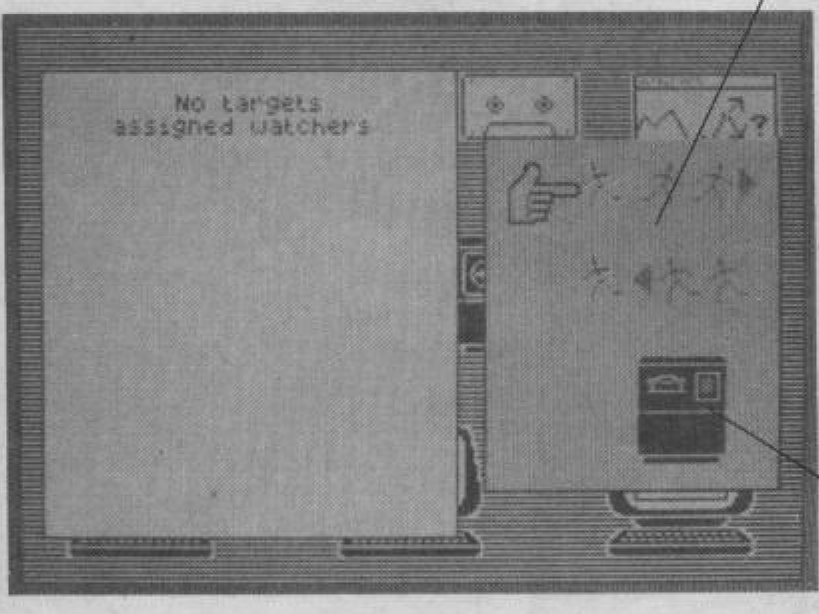


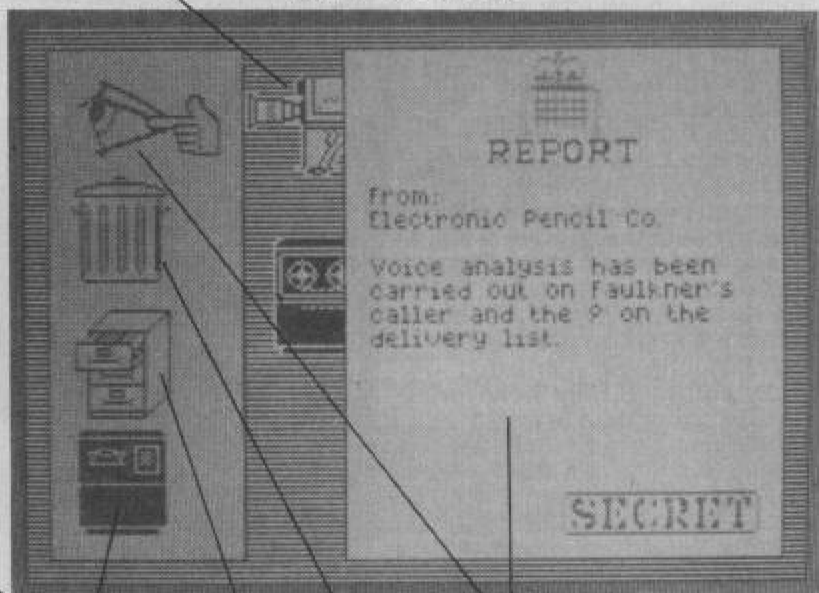




The SAS team are tooled up and raring to go

NATO DOCUMENTS





the KGB agents and defuse the device. One of the most important elements here, apart from disenabling the bomb, is actually getting to it. You must select the the best men for particular tasks and then arm them with the appropriate weapons. This is the only part of the trilogy that requires word input but at least all of the accepted commands can be viewed when required.

The earlier games allow fair thinking time, unlike the third part where you find the pressure tough — spend too much time in deep contemplation and failure is inevitable. Throughout there are sub-plots within the main plot and these can lead you away from the solution but if you keep an eye on your rating you should be able to tell when you have made a massive blunder.

In the meantime, Derek, good luck — we're counting on you!

WHAT A WONDERFULLY WALLIES YOU ARE!

The Wally Fan Club competition attracted a veritable crop of entries — a massive cardboard box full of your Wally Club Starter Packs has been half-filling the tea room for the past couple of weeks, and we've had an awful job deciding who should win the signed jigsaw puzzle.

Aided and abetted by the fearless Artroom Aide, Gordon, we've finally come up with a list of thirty worthy winners, all of whom will pick up a copy of *Everyone's a Wally*.

Outright winner had to be **David Ball**, who sent in a package which included a special hand-painted Wally T-shirt, Wally wrist bands, membership card and wallet, a copy of Paul Manning's book *How to be a Wally* together with issue one of the club newsletter and a wally-goodie price-list. David will soon be piecing together the only Wally jigsaw in the world!

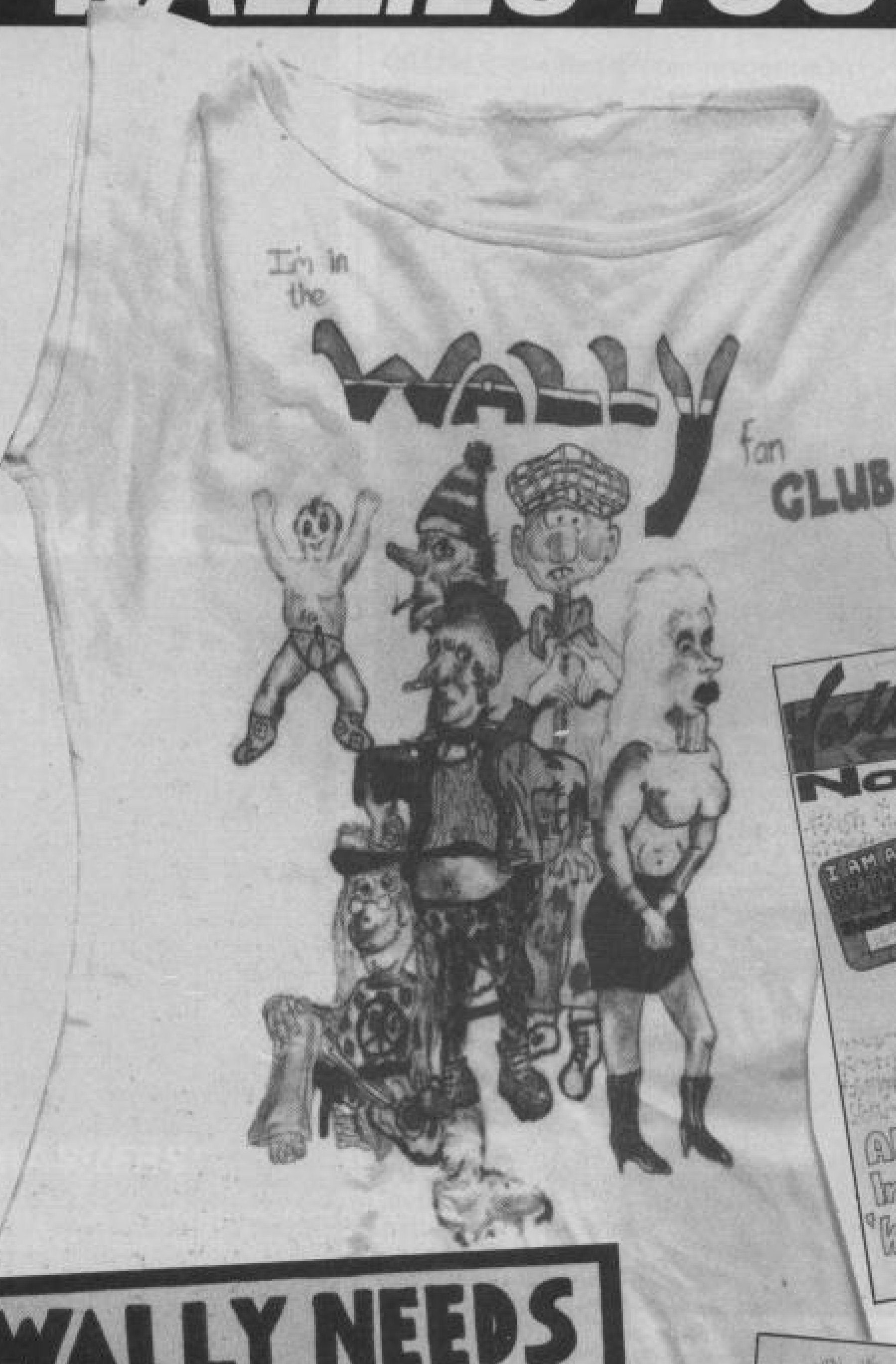
Honourable mention goes to **Daniel Watkins**, whose Wally News was beautifully designed and presented, and included a Frightful Fashion column, Wilma's Cookery Corner which had a recipe for a Wally Cake which contains 5 oz of Garlic, and The Heavy Hippie Hotline. A master of the felt pen, this man.

And **Thomas Lennon**'s pack also deserves special mention, containing a Tom safetypin and special Wally Appreciation Club handkerchief, corners for the knotting of and head for the wearing on....

The Lennon Wally Pack also contained a newsletter and a poster for a new Wally game (wonder if Mikro-Gen know about it yet!) and was very neatly put together indeed.

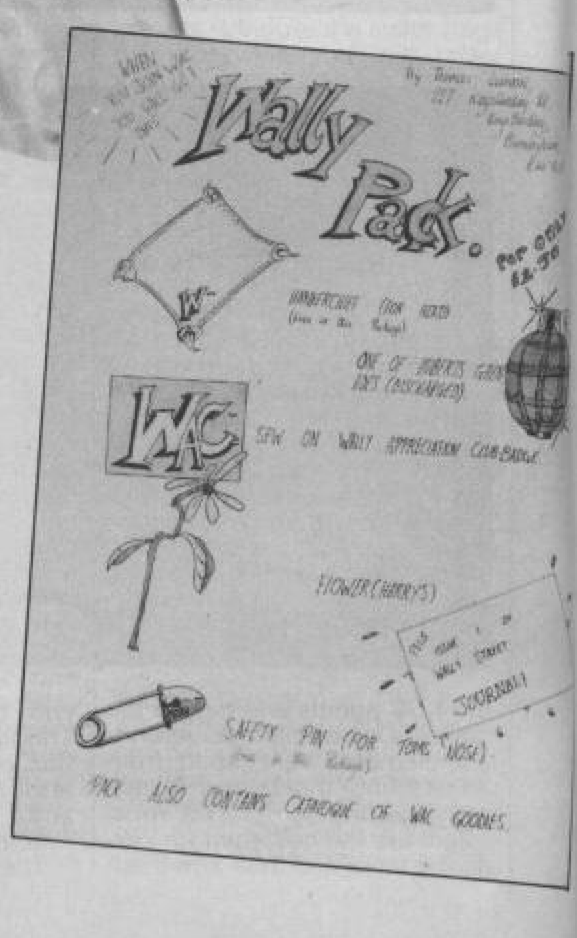
In a fit of untrammelled generosity, Dash Ed has decided to chuck a CRASH Sweatshirt to these top three winners as well, and no doubt they'll receive a goodie or two from Mikro-Gen.

Also in the Spot Prize Wallybilia stakes are **Stephen Graham** of Carlisle for his 'Keep Britain Wally' club logo, **Billy Sloan** for his 'Stronger than a Stagnant pond' Wally poster, **I McAuliffe** of Harpenden for a 'Wally Needs You' poster which owed a little to the classic Kitchener 'Your Country Needs You' poster, **David Tyler** for the idea of having Wally dart flights — totally original this one, as was **Robert Corradi**'s Tom 'ats, in a tasteful blue with rainbow mohican on the crown. **Darren Brooker**'s entry was rather like a concept folder for an advertising agency — very neatly executed, as was **Alan McNamara**'s pack. Mystery prizettes on their way to you soon chaps, courtesy of Mikro-Gen.



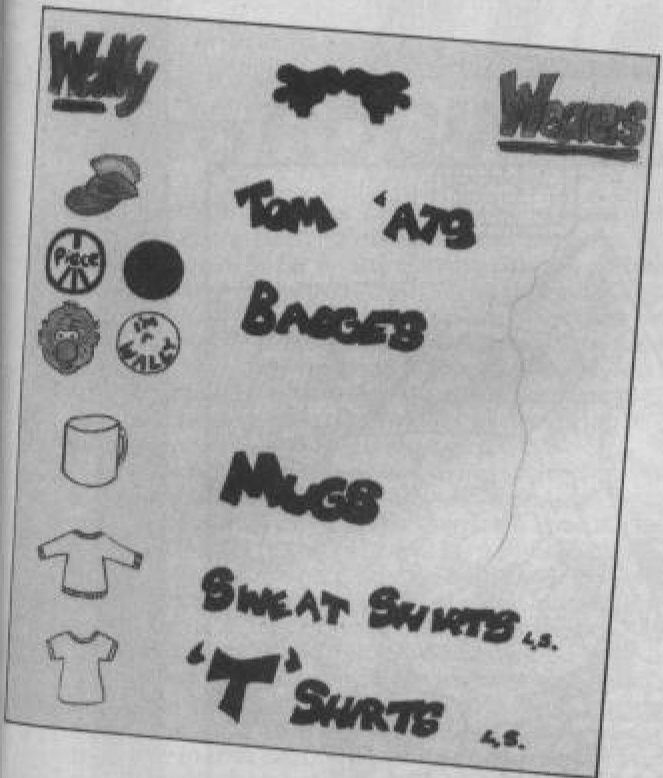






TALENTED BUNCH OF

After Much Thought and deep judging, we can now release the results of the Wally Week Fan Club Competition







A full list of the winners of the game appears on the results page, so if you haven't read you name here, don't despair yet! It was a lot of fun judging the competition, and we were amazed at the quality of the entries. But enough of the Blue Peter drivel . . . see for yourselves!

AT LAST! BACK BY POPULAR ACCLAIM! THE MONTHLY CRASH QUIZ

A Day in the Life of A Newsagent

Popping into the local paper shop for a packet of Granny Grunge's famous Ludlow Riverwater Pastilles, we were shocked to find that the staff were having a tough time.

Being a newsagent and a CRASH Competitions Editor are remarkably similar — expected to get up at five in the morning to start work, long hours for little pay, nothing but rudeness all day. . . . I had to sympathise with the staff selling copies of CRASH and ZZAP! They were being trampled underfoot by you lot!

A suitable subject for a Spot the Difference CRASH Quiz, I thought as I stumped back to the office choking over a Granny Grunge . . . . so here you are:





Spot the differences, and pop your entry into an envelope marked CRASH QUIZ to PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 25th July. First three correct entries out of the bag win Spectrum software of their choice up to the value of £25 and a CRASH T-shirt (Mega Brill and totally unhairy, unlike a certain Llama Loving Lummock -ME). Three runners up will be sent a CRASH T-Shirt of their choice.

PLAYING TIPS

from ROBIN CANDY



It is a pity that some of the better games released this month couldn't have been released earlier because it has been a pretty boring month as far as the playing tips are concerned. Luckily some bright sparks managed to get some tips in for *Herbert's Dummy Run* on time. You see our schedules are very tight which is why it may seem to you that we don't always have up to date tips — by the time you read this I will be starting issue 19's playing tips section. Hopefully that will be a bit larger than this because this month I have been allocated a smaller space (must be something to do with Lloyd) but I will try to scrounge more next month.

The response to the pokes competition has been far better than I expected but alas you will have to wait until next month to read the results. Hopefully, if the standard of entrants is high enough (and it looks as if it is) then there will be a pokes corner as a result, like the one published in the Christmas Special. There were a few wallies (no offence to Mikro-Gen) that sent in tips instead of pokes, and there were a few complete idiots who sent in JSW pokes even though it specifically said no JSW pokes.

Starting next month I'm inaugurating (Lloyd's Long Word Dictionary — no idea what it means) a new section to the tips pages called the MINI TIPS DEPARTMENT. This is devoted to all those odd tips sent in that don't get printed because they don't go into enough detail. So if you have any of these odds and ends tips send them into the usual address but state on the letter that they are for the Mini Tips Dept.

By now everyone must have noticed that there was a slight hiccup in the *Monty Mole* pokes published last issue. I don't know where line 120 disappeared to (a piece of Mangram sabotage no doubt) but here it is ***120 DATA 62, 157, 50, 132, 210, 62***. Just to make matters worse there seems to be TWO versions of *Monty Mole* and the pokes will only work on one version.

I think that's enough intro blurb for one month, but just before I start the tips I want to make a quick plea, no more DRAGONTORC or EVERYONE'S A WALLY solutions please!

WIZARD'S LAIR

Here's a routine for the maze game that seems to be very popular with many readers. It's quite a bit to input, but is worth the effort. What this does is to give you greatly incresed Lives, Keys, Energy and Weapons. For LIVES and KEYS you should put in a number between 1 and 255, and for ENERGY and WEAPONS you should type in y or n. Here goes:




```
5 REM Wizard I
10 CLEAR 65535
20 LET LIVES=4: LET KEYS=5: LET ENERGY=61: LET WEAPONS=53
30 CLS: PRINT AT 9,2; "ENTER No of lives (1 to 255)"
40 INPUT a$: LET LIVES=VAL a$: IF LIVES < 1 OR LIVES>255 THEN GOTO 40
50 CLS: PRINT AT 9,1; "ENTER No of keys etc (1 to 255)"
60 INPUT a$: LET KEYS=VAL a$: IF KEYS <1 OR KEYS >255 THEN GOTO 60
70 CLS: PRINT AT 9,0: "Do you want reduced energy loss?"; AT 11,13; "(y/n)"
80 INPUT a$: IF a$="y" THEN LET ENERGY =0: GOTO 100
90 IF a$<>"n" THEN GOTO 80
100 CLS: PRINT AT 9,1; "Do you want unlimited weapons?"; AT 11,13; "y/n"
110 INPUT a$: IF a$="y" THEN LET WEAPONS =0: GOTO 130
120 IF a$<>"n" THEN GOTO 110
130 CLS: PRINT AT 9,3; "PLAY IN WIZARD MASTER TAPE"; AT 11,9; "FROM THE START"
140 RESTORE
150 FOR n=23296 TO 23321: READ a: POKE n,a: NEXT n
160 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
170 DATA 221 , 33 , 0 , 0 , 17 , 17
180 DATA 0 , 175 , 55 , 205 , 86 , 5
190 DATA 221 , 33 , 129 , 254 , 17 , 77
200 DATA 1 , 62 , 255 , 55 , 205 , 86
210 DATA 5 , 201
220 POKE 65286,62
230 POKE 65287,255
240 POKE 65300,62
250 POKE 65301,255
260 POKE 65309,63
270 POKE 65318,62
280 POKE 65319,255
290 POKE 65338,0
300 POKE 65340,99
310 POKE 65341,255
320 POKE 65345,7
330 FOR n=65379 TO 65439: READ a: POKE n,a: NEXT n
340 RANDOMIZE USR 65280
350 DATA 49 , 0 , 65 , 33 , 116 , 255
360 DATA 17 , 0 , 64 , 1 , 44 , 0
370 DATA 237 , 176 , 195 , 0 , 64 , 33
380 DATA 255 , 254 , 17 , 255 , 255 , 1
390 DATA 0 , 164 , 237 , 184 , 49 , 3
400 DATA 94 , 62 , LIVES, 50 , 178 , 99
410 DATA 62 , KEYS , 50 , 172 , 99 , 50
420 DATA 173 , 99 , 50 , 174 , 99 , 62
430 DATA ENERGY , 50 , 137 , 186 , 62
440 DATA WEAPONS , 50 , 219 , 200 , 251
450 DATA 195 , 66 , 94
```

SHADOWFIRE

To capture general Zoff position Manto outside his quarters and drop the transporter beamer. Pick the lock and send someone into Zoff's quarters. Move a character into the same location as Zoff. Zoff will then try to escape. As soon as he moves onto the same location as Manto, beam him aboard the Enigma. A similar method can be used to capture the enemy soldiers — this saves energy.

The other half of the destruct code can be found on the Bridge but it is unlikely that you will need it because to complete the game you must *capture* the Zoff 5. This can be done by capturing or killing everyone on board. By now you should have completed the game.

DEATH STAR INTERCEPTOR

This is the type of tip that will be going into the new Mini Tips Dept. Anyway (the new alternative to 'well') this was sent in by Gary Dring of Stamford.

On the second screen, the one where you get attacked by Tie fighters, move to the bottom right hand side of the screen. This means that none of the enemy craft ever hit you. The only draw back is that it only works on level 1.

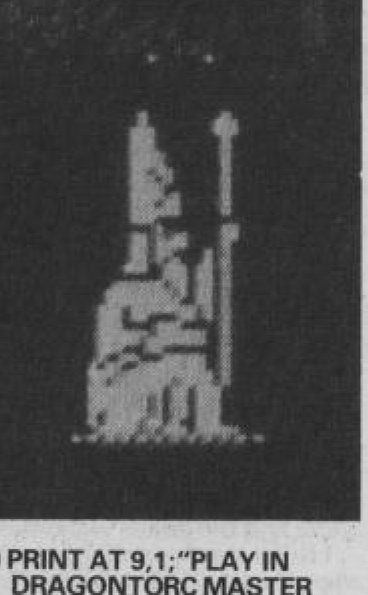
Does anyone have any pokes?

PLAYING TIPS

Please note that due to the amount of letters that arrive for the Forum and Playing Tips, it is simply not possible to enter into personal and private correspondence. We hope you understand this, and would rather make the point this way than have disappointed readers waiting for replies that may never come. Thank you.

DRAGONTORC

It seems that along the way I've lost some of you in the Vaults Of Locris. The problem seems to be getting the letter I. Go to the room with the stool and fireball in it and move the servant over the stool; this will change it into a chest. Open all the other chests in the vault and you should have two keys. One of these opens the chest by the fireball. Open this chest and the fireball should change into the halfmoon and inside the chest is the letter I. For those of you who have got to Halgor's Sanctuary find and take the energy herb. Now find the skelebone and search to get the diving rod. With the diving rod search the leaves and pools to receive the BANE jewel and the Crystal of Anti-thought. Use the Seal to open the tombstone and go down. Read the message and leave everything except Halgor's Seal and go through the door. Touch the Seal on the three spiders before they kill you. Take the three spells. Use the RETURN spell to get into Halgor's tomb room. Search the tomb for the door key to get out. Leave with half moon early and go to Witchwood to find Sanctuary for the key to the Locris vaults. That's your ration of *Dragontorc* **tips for this month but if you are having trouble with your energy level then just try these pokes as sent in by** K Walker **of** Birmingham. **Type in the listing and save it to auto run from line 10.**



```
10 PRINT AT 9,1;"PLAY IN
   DRAGONTORC MASTER
   TAPE";AT 11,9;"FROM THE
   START"
20 RESTORE
30 FOR N = 23424 TO 23487:
   READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
40 RANDOMIZE USR 23424
100 DATA 049, 122, 096, 006, 002
110 DATA 197, 221, 033, 000, 000
120 DATA 017, 000, 000, 062, 255
130 DATA 055, 205, 086, 005, 193
140 DATA 016, 239, 221, 033, 016
150 DATA 189, 017, 239, 066, 062
160 DATA 255, 055, 205, 086, 005
170 DATA 062, 201, 050, 193, 189
180 DATA 205, 016, 189, 221, 033
190 DATA 124, 096, 017, 212, 098
200 DATA 062, 255, 055, 205, 086
210 DATA 005, 062, 255, 050, 225
220 DATA 227, 195, 124, 096
```

TECHNICIAN TED

These tips on the order of the tasks in *Technician Ted* **were sent in by** Michael Roland **of West Germany. Incidently has anyone managed to crack** *Technician Ted* **for infinite lives pokes etc?**

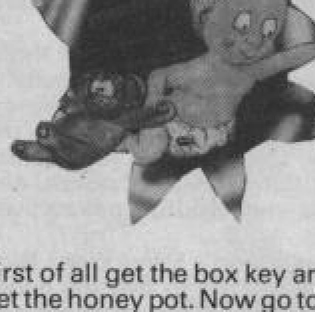
You must complete these tasks within the time limits printed by each one.

Ted's Desk by 8:56
Silicon Slice Store by 9:09
Slice Diffusion by 9:27
Fuming Cupboard by 9:58
Clean Room by 10:07
Silicon Etching Plant by 10:22
Canteen by 10:40
Photocopier by 11:12
Boardroom by 11:25
Slice Surface Abrasion by 11:56
Laser Slice Separation by 12:15
Bay 7 by 12:34
Micro Chip Mounting by 12:59
Tea Machine 13:02
Power Generator by 13:18
Electro Plating Bath by 14:00
Quality Assurance Dept 14:25
Abrasion Dust Extract by 14:38
Matthew's Lair by 14:58
We Call Him Sir by 15:50
The Wage Department by 16:07

After completing the Wage Department then you must go to the picket line, up to the Union flag and again down to the Picket line (in the middle). From here you can now go left and into a new room called OK! WHERE DO I GET MY REWARD. Go into this room and walk left through the exit room to complete the game. You MUST keep with in the time limit if you wish to complete the game. To plan out your routes to and from rooms use the map published in a back issue of CRASH **(No 15 April, page 70)**.

HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN

Here is quite a bit of the solution to *Herbert's Dummy Run* **as sent in by** J Wankling **of Birmingham.**



First of all get the box key and get the honey pot. Now go to the room that you start off in and jump up on to the box. This will spring you up to where you can exchange the honey pot for the teddy. Get the rope. Now with the rope and the teddy go to the arcade room with the daleks in it. The teddy will go and open the right hand side door; you can now go through this. Jump at the rope in the next room and it should extend into a room with a rubber duck; collect this. Load the pop gun (with the cork and the pop gun) and go to the castle. Exchange the pop gun for the flag and with the rubber duck go to the seaside screen. You can now collect the pebbles to load the catapult....

There was more to J's letter but you will have to wait until next month for that. Anyway you probably know it all by now!

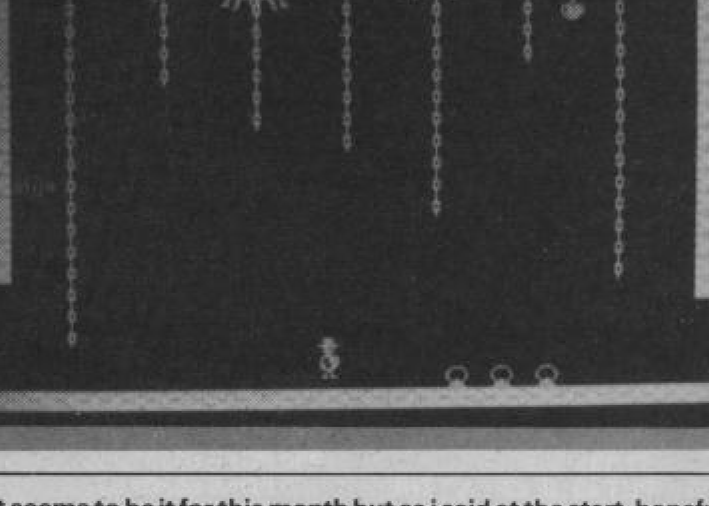
DUN DARACH

Now I don't want to give the game away (I'll let you suffer for another month) but to help you off let me just say that there is a Goldbar Merchant in West Way and an Aurums Buyer in Cross Street — enough said.

CHUCKIE EGG 2

These are general tips as sent in by Robert Williams **of Warley. Surprisingly there haven't been that many tips for this game but quite a few maps. Enough of the droning and on with Robert's tips.**

If you hit a bouncing ball from the side you bounce off but if you hit it from the top then you die. Yellow hands kill you but you bounce off green hands. Pink elephants **(I'm sure Minter sees many of these -RC)** kill you as do all birds, moles, bats, ice skates and icicles. C5s don't kill. If you collect a basket then you can't jump. The factory needs power so look for the generator. You need eight bottles of milk, eight tins of cocoa and eight bags of sugar. When you have completed an egg take it to the train and to despatch.



That seems to be it for this month but as i said at the start, hopefully next month will see a bumper issue of pokes, tips and all the usual assortment of things you have come to expect from me *(like long-winded intros -LM)*. **Do remember the MINI TIPS DEPT and keep the pokes coming in. Okay that's it from me. Bye until next month.**

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GYRON

MAP OF THE ATRIUM

HOW TOWERS WORK

Towers can only be fired at from specific locations, and only from the rear as their armour protects them on the other three sides. Furthermore, bear in mind that each tower has one, and only one set of effects associated with it.

A tower's blind spot is very narrow. You can occupy one of the 192 possible lateral positions (or tracks) across the width of a trench, and a tower's blind spot corresponds to one track.

Be careful — the green Lateral Indicator is sensitive only to the nearest eight tracks, so when you move up against a trench wall check visually on the main screen that you cannot move any further up against the wall. (There will be some very slight movement of the trench wall if you can.)

SOLVING THE ATRIUM

The Atrium is the entry to the more complex Necropolis. Here, your driving abilities may be practised and the techniques for puzzle solving and trap avoidance may be leamt.

Your objective in the Atrium is to find the 'entrance' to the Necropolis, the key tower highlighted by the others in the Chapel being your target.

Driving is aided by the Indicators, chief of which is the Radar Map which displays both the orientation of the towers and any change in direction of the towers nearby which is produced by your firing at them.

The red Side Passage Indicators help you to turn corners precisely, and the green Lateral Indicator facilitates getting into the blind spots of towers.

As an added aid, the four distinct sky patterns may be used to show the direction in which you are facing.

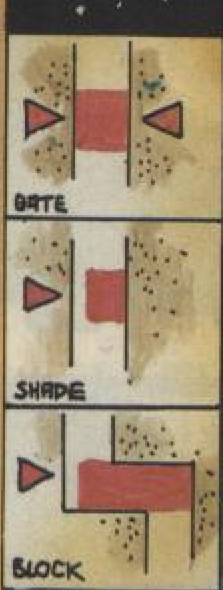
TOWER CONFIGURATIONS

There are three basic tower configurations: a Gate; a Shade and a Block.

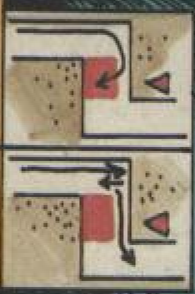
The Gate: this is where two towers face each other across a trench so that each cancels out the other's blind spot. It is plain to see that movement through a gate is impossible.

The Shade: found where a tower 'shades' a trench — the only way to pass along a shaded trench is to travel along the shading tower's blind spot.

The Block: this configuration is by far the nastiest. Here, a tower faces down the length of a trench, making it impossible to exist anywhere in it.

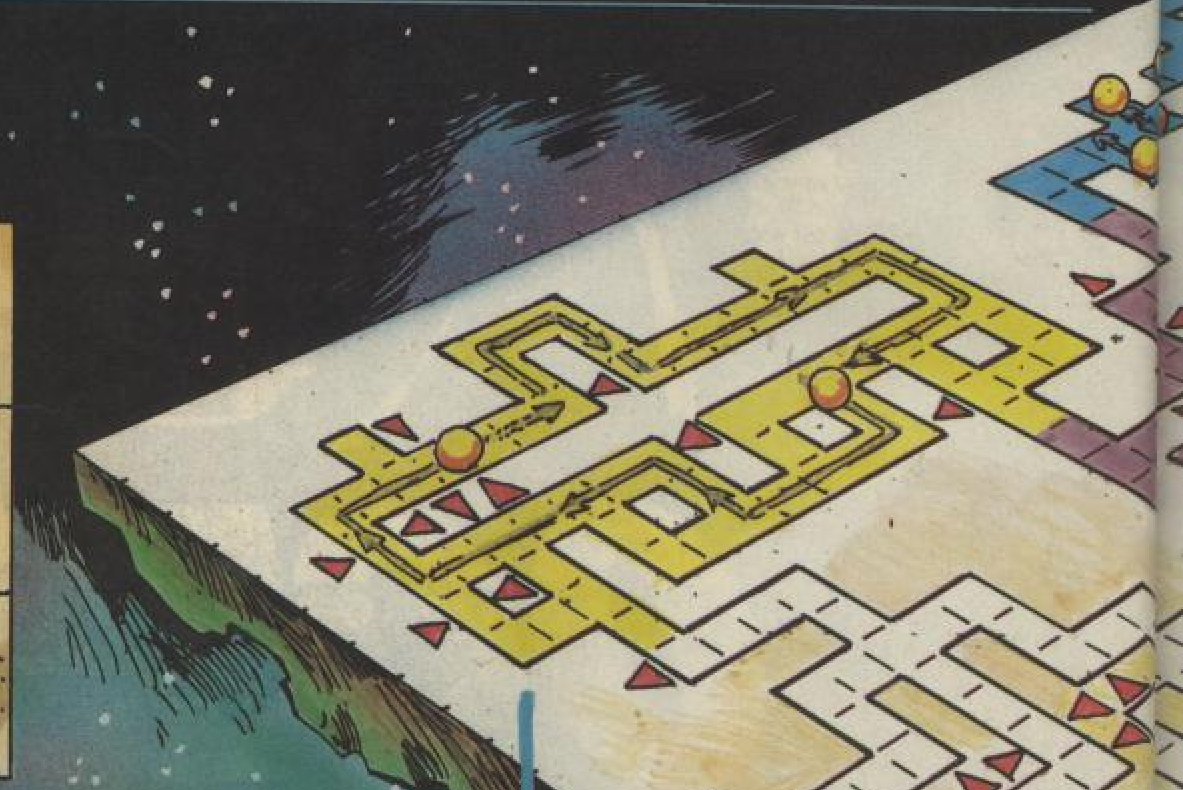


NB. In certain cases, when turning a corner into a blind spot, your lateral momentum carries you out of the blind spot. At such times it is advisable to orientate yourself so that this momentum moves you into the wall at the blindspot, after turning. Sounds tricky . . . but the diagram here should help make it clear.



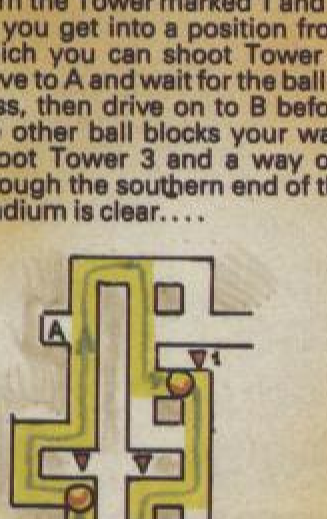
No Reverse: momentum carries Hedroid out of blind spot

Reverse before entering blind spot: momentum keeps hedroid against wall.



The Stadium:
There are two solutions to this — find the easier one for yourself, but drive this one for thrills!

Use a ball to give you cover from the Tower marked 1 and to let you get into a position from which you can shoot Tower 2. Drive to A and wait for the ball to pass, then drive on to B before the other ball blocks your way. Shoot Tower 3 and a way out through the southern end of the Stadium is clear. . . .



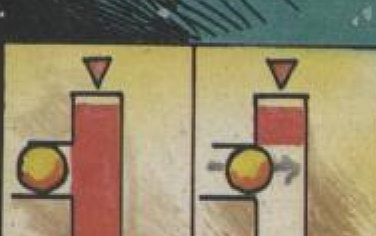


The Crypt:
Shooting Towers marked 1, 2, or 3 permits access to one of the three passages marked A, B and C. Only one passage is ever open at a time. To leave the Crypt you will need to deactivate

MAKING USE OF COVER

In the Atrium, the balls only act as cover if they are between you and a tower, though in the Necropolis you will find that you might have to observe their movements very carefully. Apart from standing still for long periods, they also block the pathways between regions at certain times.

Keeping very close to balls does tend to make the towers reluctant to fire at you . . . though it might result in you getting squashed instead.

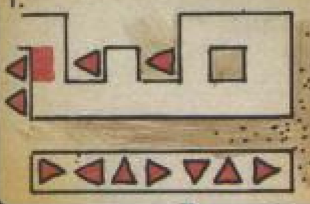


Tower blocks passage across junction

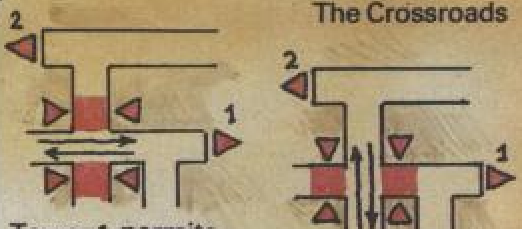
Ball provides cover and blocks tower's fire

the gate formed by Towers 4 and 5. Shooting Tower 5 will erect a Gate over niche D, so time your shots carefully to allow you to take refuge in niche E before the Cryptkeeper comes rolling back to get you!

The Key
Enter the Key carefully, via the blind spot of the Tower marked 1.

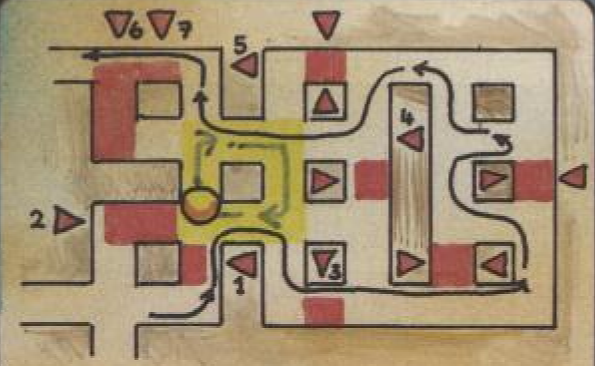


The Crossroads



Tower 1 permits East-West crossing

Tower 2 permits North-South crossing



The Beetle:
(Good practice for negotiating blind spots, this one . . . .)

Get into Tower 1's blind spot then use the ball to block the fire from Tower 2. Slip around the corner — but quickly!

Drive through Tower 3's blind spot, deactivate Towers 4 and 5 and exit via the double-blind spot of Towers 6 and 7.

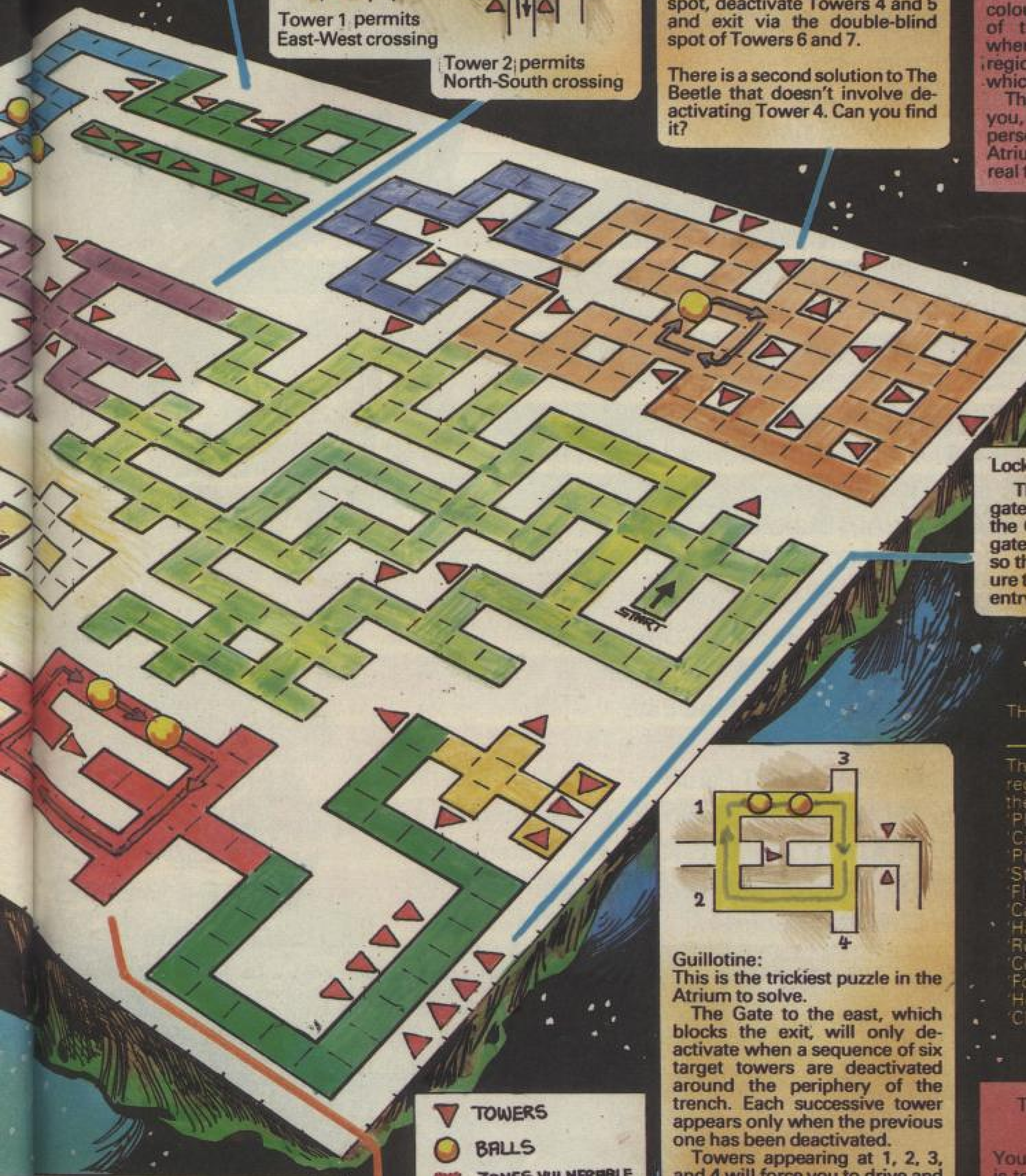
There is a second solution to The Beetle that doesn't involve deactivating Tower 4. Can you find it?

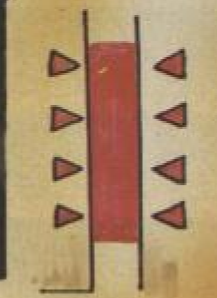
THE SOLUTION TO THE ATRIUM

There are several ways to solve the Atrium, though the basic solution is:
'The Garden' (light green);
'The Crossroads' (purple);
'The Alley' (blue);
'The Key' (dark green);
'The Alley';
'The Garden';
'The Beetle' (bronze);
'The Wheel' (lilac);
'The Garden';
'The Crossroads';
'The Stadium' (yellow);
'The Crypt' (white);
'The Guillotine' (red);
'The Lock' (dark green);
'The Chapel' (gold).

The names given in this list are those of the regions, and the colours in brackets is the colour of the icosahedron indicator when you are in that region. The regions are listed in the order in which they should be driven.

This information will enable you, with a bit of practice and perseverance, to solve the Atrium. Then the next step is the real thing. . . . **The Necropolis.**





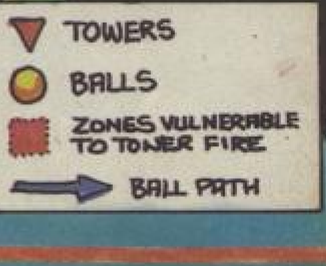
Lock:

The Lock is a series of four gates blocking the entrance to the Chapel. To open these four gates, turn the seven tumblers so that they all point south. Failure to open the Lock will prevent entry to the Chapel.

Guillotine:
This is the trickiest puzzle in the Atrium to solve.

The Gate to the east, which blocks the exit, will only deactivate when a sequence of six target towers are deactivated around the periphery of the trench. Each successive tower appears only when the previous one has been deactivated.

Towers appearing at 1, 2, 3, and 4 will force you to drive and fire at the remaining target-towers from between two balls. (The balls, being distanced just less than one square apart, provide continuous cover for someone driving between them.)



WITH THANKS TO FIREBIRD AND THE GYRON PROGRAMMERS

THE TWELVE REGIONS OF THE NECROPOLIS

These are the names of the regions in the Necropolis and their associated colours:
'Playpen' (green);
'Crossover' (yellow);
'Pipe' (blue);
'Staircase' (bronze);
'Flytrap' (white);
'Cathedral' (gold);
'Hairpin Canyons' (cyan);
'Roundabout' (purple);
'Cocoon' (magenta);
'Fortress' (turquoise);
'Heart' (red);
'Clock' (light green).

THE SOLUTION TO THE NECROPOLIS

Your objective in the Necropolis is to find 'the Place of Wisdom' where you will be given an encoded message. The location of this is a secret, but you will know it when you see something unusual . . . when you see something that is not what it seems. . . .

HOTLINE TOP 30 FOR JULY

1 *(2)* **ALIEN 8** Ultimate
2 *(3)* **KNIGHT LORE** Ultimate
3 *(5)* **MATCH DAY** Ocean
4 *(1)* **EVERYONE'S A WALLY** Mikro-Gen
5 *(25)* **SPY HUNTER** US Gold
6 *(11)* **UNDERWURLDE** Ultimate
7 *(4)* **BRUCE LEE** US Gold
8 *(19)* **SKOOL DAZE** Microsphere
9 *(17)* **STARION** Melbourne House
10 *(13)* **RAID OVER MOSCOW** US Gold

A few shuffles at the top with *Alien 8* up to one, knocking *Everyone's A Wally* down to position 4, and *Match Day* taking a leap up to 3. But the biggest leaper is from **US Gold** — up 20 spots to this month's number 5 for *Spy Hunter*. *Underwurlde* has also made a comeback, recovering from 11 to 6, similar for *Skool Daze*. **Imagine**'s *WS Baseball* climbs too, 29 to 14 with, not far behind, the shoot em up *Moon Cresta* from **Incentive at 17, shooting in from nowhere. Other new entries include Elite**'s *Grand National* and the giant maze game *Gyron* from **Firebird** in at 24 and 30 respectively. *Pyjamarama* and *Booty* have also made reappearances.



11 *(10)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
12 *(8)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
13 *(14)* **STARSTRIKE** Realtime
14 *(29)* **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL** Imagine
15 *(23)* **SABREWULF** Ultimate
16 *(15)* **DT'S DECATHLON** Ocean
17 *(—)* **MOON CRESTA** Incentive
18 *(18)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
19 *(9)* **BOULDERDASH** Front Runner
20 *(7)* **WIZARD'S LAIR** Bubble Bus

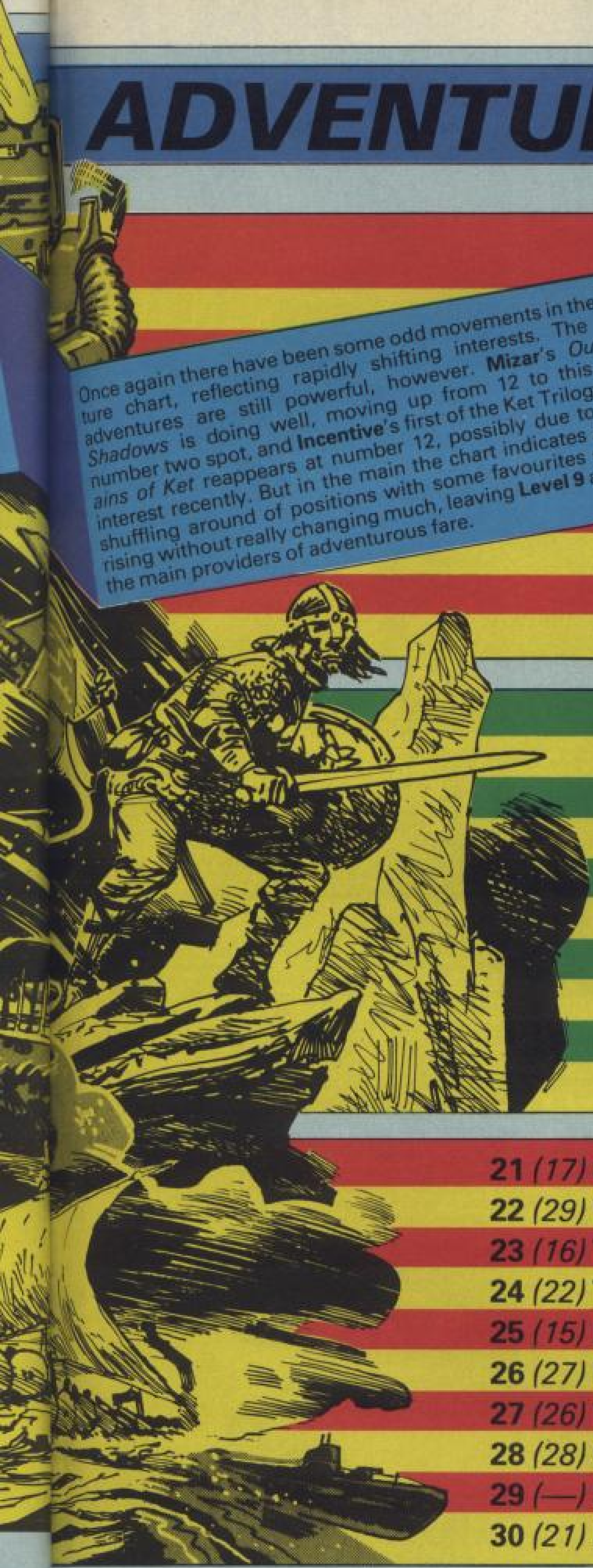
21 *(12)* **BRIAN BLOODAXE** The Edge
22 *(20)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
23 *(—)* **PYJAMARAMA** Mikro-Gen
24 *(—)* **GRAND NATIONAL** Elite
25 *(—)* **BOOTY** Firebird
26 *(21)* **MATCH POINT** Psion
27 *(28)* **TECHNICIAN TED** Hewson Consultants
28 *(22)* **DEATH STAR INTERCEPTOR** System 3
29 *(27)* **CHUCKIE EGG 2** A & F Software
30 *(—)* **GYRON** Firebird

The winner of this month's Hotline draw is **Craig Bartlett** from Kempshott, Basingstoke; and the four runners-up are: **Keith Giscombe** of Droitwich, Worcs; **NS Wilson** from Shepperton, Middlesex; **David Cairns** of Hillsborough, Co Down; and **Henry Shades** from Glasgow

BRILL 'N' FAB HOTLINE PRIZES!!

The CRASH HOTLINE & ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart. It depends entirely on your support and we need your votes. There are two methods for voting, either use the CRASH HOTLINE PHONE-IN, or cut out the special coupons which you can find on page 122
Whether you phone or write in, all the names go into the Hotline Bag to be drawn monthly. First out in both charts receives £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE plus a CRASH T-SHIRT. The four runners-up in both charts each receive a CRASH T-SHIRT and THREE free issues of CRASH Magazine (a kind of mini-subscription — existing subscriptions will be appropriately extended).

ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



Once again there have been some odd movements in the Adventure chart, reflecting rapidly shifting interests. The arcade/adventures are still powerful, however. **Mizar**'s *Out of the Shadows* is doing well, moving up from 12 to this month's number two spot, and **Incentive**'s first of the Ket Trilogy, *Mountains of Ket* reappears at number 12, possibly due to Signpost interest recently. But in the main the chart indicates a constant shuffling around of positions with some favourites slipping or rising without really changing much, leaving **Level 9** and **Artic** as the main providers of adventurous fare.

1 *(1)* **DRAGONTORC** **Hewson Consultants**
2 *(12)* **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
3 *(2)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
4 *(4)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
5 *(6)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
6 *(3)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9 Computing
7 *(5)* **VALKYRIE 17** Ram Jam Corporation
8 *(8)* **RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9 Computing
9 *(10)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
10 *(13)* **SNOWBALL** Level 9 Computing

11 *(9)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
12 *(—)* **MOUNTAINS OF KET** Incentive
13 *(7)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
14 *(23)* **RUNES OF ZENDOS** Dorcas
15 *(25)* **HAMPSTEAD** Melbourne House
16 *(24)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd
17 *(11)* **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9 Computing
18 *(18)* **TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY** Bug-Byte
19 *(19)* **KENTILLA** Micromega
20 *(14)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House

21 *(17)* **GOLDEN APPLE** Artic
22 *(29)* **VELNOR'S LAIR** Quicksilva
23 *(16)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
24 *(22)* **THE HULK** Adventure International
25 *(15)* **EUREKA!** Domark
26 *(27)* **PLANET OF DOOM** Artic
27 *(26)* **VALHALLA** Legend
28 *(28)* **ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas
29 *(—)* **SHIP OF DEATH** Artic
30 *(21)* **ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic

The winner of the Adventure Trail Chart for this month is **Michael Slater** from Ramsbottom, Lancs. The four runners-up are: **D Schraibman** of Shawclough, Rochdale; **P Chessman** from Waterlooville, Hants; **C Crowberry** of Barbourne, Worcester; and **Chi-Wah-Yau** from London NW1



The CRASH PHONE-IN HOTLINE NUMBER has been discontinued. Whilst so many people kindly ring in and leave their votes without any fuss, a large percentage of readers have abused the service with obscene phonecalls. This situation has been made worse with callers mis-dialling and upsetting people. It is with regret we make this decision, but in the circumstances we have been left with no choice. So please note that the 3015 number is no longer answering to HOTLINE VOTERS. Please use the printed forms provided to register your vote which can be found in every issue.



Lloyd Mangram's Noose of Terror for all cheats is being tightened, ready for another HALL OF SLIME. This is the page that prints the truth, the whole truth, and nothing like the truth — a page of wholesome gruesomeness the like of which Mary Whitehouse has never seen. Anyway, after all that, let's get on with the scores ....
LLOYD MANGRAM

Atic Atac 97%, 49,875
Penetrator 20,540 — Level 4
Football Manager 7 seasons
Blue Thunder 3,400
Ant Attack 6 people saved
Neil Hindle, Accrington, Lancashire

Jetpac 4,000,000
Everyone's a Wally Wally, £220; Wilma, £350; Tom, £50; Dick, £200; Harry, £260
Connect 4 Computer beaten at all levels
Alien 8 100% completed
Phil Needham,Alford

Trashman 15,527
Wriggler 2,190
Baseball 1 won, 29-26
Alien 8 10 chambers
Carl Signer, Southampton

Beach Head 130,800
Match Day 9-0 in Final
Dark Star 8,810, completed
Starstrike 1,508,400
Lords of Midnight 21 days completed
Paul Cavill, Shepton Mallet, Somerset

Pyjamarama 96%, using 3211 paces
Matchpoint Beat the computer in the final: 6-4, 6-3, 6-4
3D Starstrike 1,000,740 on 'Easy'
Matchday 26-0 on 15 minute game
Airwolf Rescued 4 scientists
J Notman, Capel Road, Clydach, S Wales

Ant Attack 10 saved
Jungle Trouble completed
Beach Head completed
Zzoom 100,650
Kung Fu black belt, level 7

Nicholas Pettigrew, Netherley, Liverpool

Bruce Lee 414,075, killed wizard seven times
Jet Pac 93,955
Mark Harrison, Chiswell Green St Albans

Dragontorc of Avalon completed
Ian Lennon and Dylan Jones

Steve Davis 127 break
Raid Over Moscow 99,450
Atic Atac 83%
Spy Hunter 99,850 points
Dangermouse saved the world 5 times on the trot
Grant King, Kettering, Northants

Match point Won in all rounds
Chuckie Egg 323,550
Psytraxx 25%
Everyone's a Wally £1,640 overall
Bruce Lee 712,125
Spy Hunter 372,165
Andrew Dunn, Sheffield

Atic Atac complete at 99% in 15 mins
Airwulf 2 scientists rescued
Monty is Innocent Almost complete (!)
Automania Porsche second lap
Monty Mole 18th screen
Karl Tunnicliff, Bishops Stortford, Herts

Zzoom 98,750
Potty Pigeon Level Three
Pyjamarama 95% complete
Airwulf 2 scientists
Spy Hunter 157,905
Raid Over Moscow 179,200: complete, 3 men survived
Pole Position 67,400
S C D, Dorking, Surrey

Lazy Jones cleared twice
Manic Miner Level 19
Everyone's a Wally £1,840
Cookie baked cake, then level 3
Jack and the Beanstalk completed
Pyjamarama completed
M Thorpe, West Hill, Devon

Atic Atac Completed 78%
Bruce Lee Completed 5 times with a score of 201,800
Sabre Wulf Completed 82%
Starion Levels 1, 3, 7, 8 and 9 completed
Hunchback 2 Level 6
Lee Woolls, Pencoed, S Wales

Boulder Dash complete
Tranz Am 32 cups
Alien Short game: 3 crew escaped, 40%
Alien 8 complete, with time at 263.7
Death Star Interceptor 126,000
Starstrike 826,400 on hard
Craig Lemon, Braintree, Essex

Harrier Attack 35,910
Pogo 101,275
Finders Keepers £800.64
Doomdark's Revenge completed
Andrew Dickinson, Penwortham, Lancs

Alien 55%
World Series baseball 52-11 in 9 innings, Level 2, 11-8 in 9 innings on top level
Sherlock Pushed Watson out of train and gave Basil a good hiding (!)
Chris Robertson, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham

Spyhunter 551,525
Bruce Lee 999,300 — completed 17 times
Beach Head 107,800
Lunar Jet Man 73,650
Harrier Attack 33,710
Richard 'Pimaniac' Owen, Harlow, Essex

Star Strike 965,590
Bruce Lee completed 8 times in a row with 819,425
Knight Lore 89% with 15 charms
Alien 8 activated 9 cryogenic chambers
Stuart Gibson, Plumstead, London

Combat Lynx 24,700
Raid Over Moscow 90,200 on hard
Software Star Playing in 1998
Pole Position 66,500
Bruce Lee 1,939,425, screen 189, playing for 2 hours 45 Minutes — could have scored more but I had to go and have a bath (!!!!!!)
Robert Williams, Warley, West Mids

Chuckie Egg 417,370 Level 32
Psst 179,780
Knight Lore 56% completed, 5 charms
Booty 67 pieces
Cookie completed cake
Leight Purnell, Swansea

Time Gate Level 5 completed
Chuckie Egg Two 239,700
Arcadia 323,532, Level 37
D.T.'s Decathalon 100m, 9.90; Long jump, 9.89; Shot putt, 33.90; High jump 2.46; 400m, 28.10; 110m Hurdles, 8.90; Javelin, 132.44; Discus, 75.90; Pole vault, 5.05; 1500m, 4.11.53
John Morgan, Oswestry, Shropshire

Matchday 5 minutes each way: Amateur, won 17-0; Professional, won 16-0; International, won 15-1. 45 minutes each way: Amateur 160-0
Sabre Wulf 97% completed
Manic Miner 232,550
Deathstar Interceptor Space Cadet, 10,600; Lieutenant, 8,900, Commander 7,700
Chuckie Egg 415,320, level 32
Matthew Wilson, Harrogate, N Yorks

Okay, that's your lot for this month. Don't forget you can Slime on Micronet if you want (although BT don't like getting their lines in a mess — CRASH MBX 105845851 — but don't think all this high tech nonsense allows you to cheat, all scores go through the Mangram lie detector before being printed. Otherwise, via stamp, it's HALL OF SLIME, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

CRASH BACK NUMBERS

ZX SPECTRUM

fill that CRASH Gap.....

1 February 84	● Out of stock
2 March 84	● 'Kong' games ● Currah Microspeech ● Living Guide ● Steve Turner
3 April 84	● 'Missile Command' games ● Living Guide ● Sinclair Talks ● Code Name Mat
4 May 84	● The Quill utility ● Graphics utilities ● Microdrive ● 'Pengo' games ● Living Guide
5 June 84	● New Generation ● Jet Set Willy Map ● 'Panic' games ● Alphacom printer
6 July 84	● 3D in games ● Atic Atac Map 1 ● Specgraf ● 'Pacman' games
7 August 84	● Atic Atac Map 2 ● Lo Profile keyboard ???
8 September 84	● Tir Na Nog ● Downsway & Comcon i'face ● White Lightning graphics utility ● Martin Wheeler ● Antic Map ● Design Design ● Lothlorien
9 October 84	● Games Workshop ● Dk'Tronics
10 November 84	● Battlefield Joystick — comparisons ● Deus Ex Machina
11 December 84	● Music Typewriter ● Sureshot j'stick ● Hisoft Ultrakit ● Lords of Midnight Map ● Wanted: Monty Mole Map ● Pyjamarama Map
12 Christmas Special	● Mangram looks back ● Super Mutt Map ● Death of Imagine ● Readers Awards ● Spectrum+ ● Inside CRASH ● Timex Disc Drive ???
13 February 85	● Joy Sensor j'stick ● Mikro-Gen ● Psytraxx Map ● Mini Office ● Steve Jackson
14 March 85	● Airwolf Map ● Tir Na Nog Map ● Omnicalc 2 ● Mike Singleton ● Doomdark's Revenge map ● Artist: Steinar Lund
15 April 85	● London Underground Map (!) ● Designer's Pencil ● Backpackers Map ● Technician ted Map ● Sinclair Story 1 ● Chris Sievey ● Scott Adams ● Mizar ● Artist: David Rowe
16 May 85	● Sports simulations roundup ● Sinclair Story 2 ● Firebird ● Incentive ● Light Magic graphics utility ● music utilities ● Underwurlde Map 1 ● Bruce lee map ● Sabre Wulf Map ● Everyone's A Wally Map ● Artist: Godfrey Dowson
17 June 85	● Denton Designs ● Frankie ● Spectrum surgery ● Sinclair Story 3 ● Knight Lore Map 1 ● Underwurlde Map 2 ● Tape to Microdrive ● Leonardo graphics utility ● Datel sound sampler ● Artist: David Thorpe



With the exception of issue 1, we carry a limited stock of back numbers for readers who may have missed out on earlier issues and for those with gaps in their Binders! Any issue bearing ??? after the mini-contents means that the stock is severely limited and before ordering you should phone to check.

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Crash Competition

THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE Dept. . . .

The world's very first ICON DRIVEN Competition, brought to you by no less than CRASH in association with BEYOND

WIN! 25 T/SHIRTS AND 25 SIGNED COPIES OF SHADOWFIRE

Fans of *Terminal Man* will no doubt spot a certain similarity of style on these pages — well Oli felt it was time to put together another little cartoon strip for your entertainment. The few philistines out there who couldn't abide *TM* will no doubt gleefully go and boil their heads, shan't feel up to entering this competition, and won't want to win any SHADOWFIRE T-Shirts. . . .

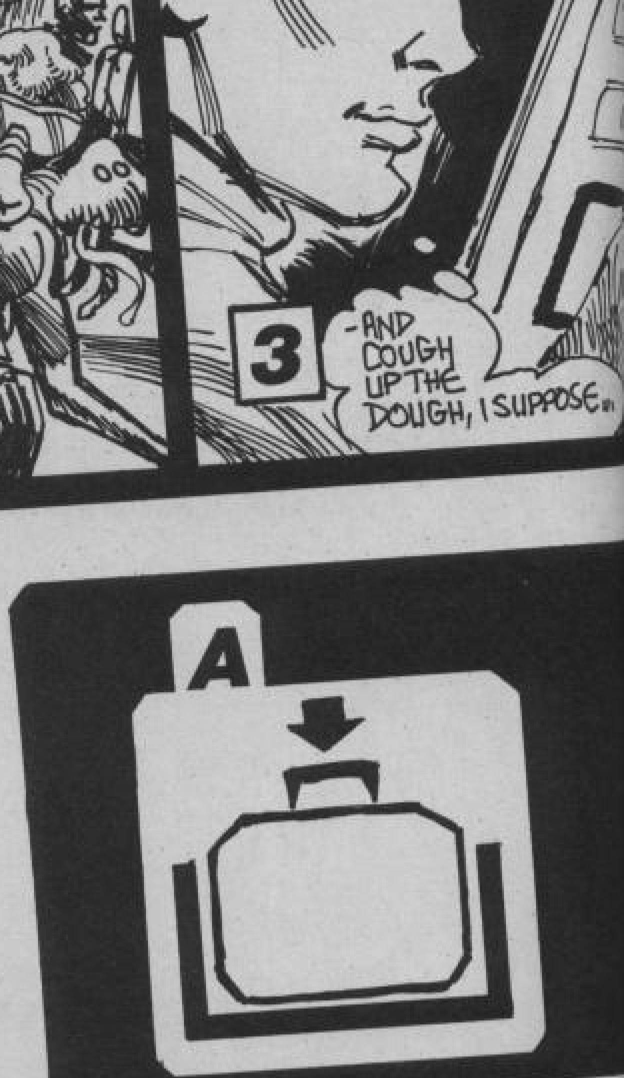
Our Hero, depicted here, finds himself in a Spaceport, negotiating his way around the High Tech environment. Owing to the multiplicity (good word..found it in Lloyd Mangram's Long Word Dictionary) of languages used by the beings that travel through the Spaceport, all the control consoles are icon driven.

An Icon is a little picture, used in SHADOWFIRE and in this Spaceport, to represent an option on the menu of a program. Our Hero successfully negotiated the computers in the Spaceport by selecting the appropriate icon in every case. But which Icons did he use?

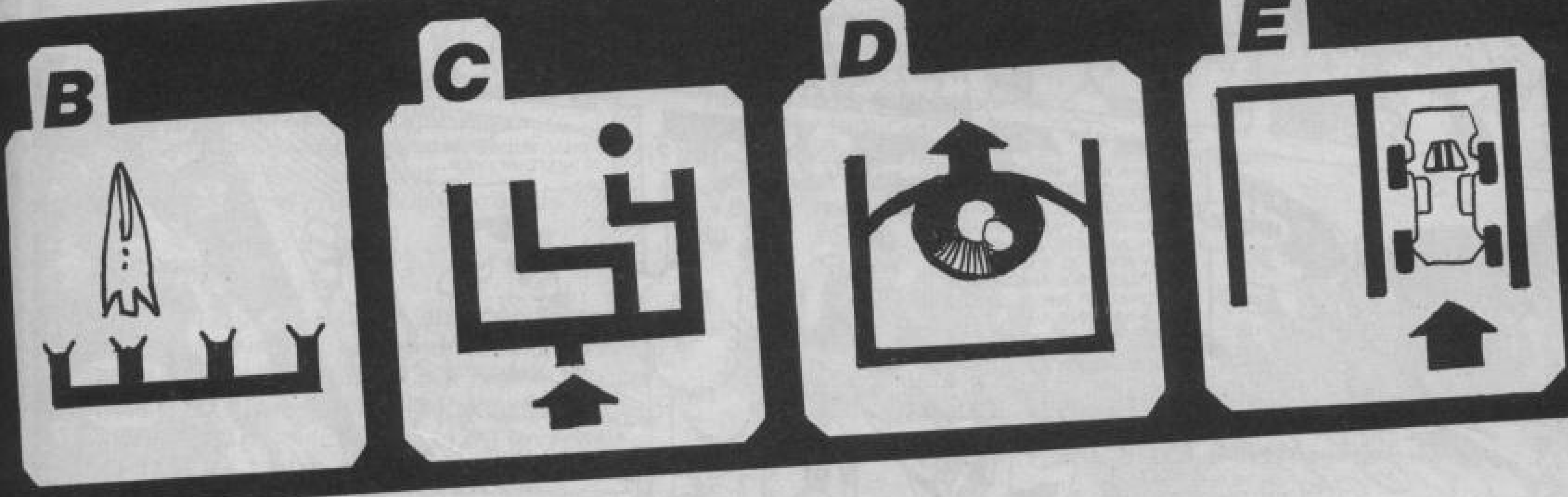
That, dear Competition Entrants, is what you've got to decide. Oli the Magnificent isn't so good on Icons — he couldn't make up his mind which icon to put on which computer screen. It's a bit of a cop-out on his part, but then you need an opportunity to exercise your skill and judgement, don't you?

Study the action in the cartoon strip, examine the icons available and make your decision. Match up the letter of the icon you think fits best on each numbered frame of the strip and whizz your entries to SHADOWFIRE COMPETITION, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 25th July and you could be yet another lucky winner.






2185 AD LUDLOW SPACEPORT
HERE AT LAST!
WHY PUT A SPACEPORT SO FAR OUT IN THE STICKS...?!
GET THE DROID TO PARK THE CAR...
-GET THE RIGHT ICON...
YEZ ZIR!
1
GET THIS DROID TO COLLECT MY LUGGAGE
-I'M LATE
YEZ, ZIR!
2
WHICH DEPARTURE GATE? -QUICK
4
MADE IT!
-OPEN VIEW PORT MUST HAVE A LOOK
5
HMPH...!
WHAT A VIEW...
CLOUDS...


B
C
D
E



ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENT
JETMAN
THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE FOLLOWED THIS STRIP WILL KNOW WHAT IS GOING DOWN HERE! THOSE OF YOU WHO DIDN'T, WONT! HAH!
WOW!
FOOD
YEH!
GRUB!
EAT!
LOONY
SNAX!
WOW!
FLEE
OH, WOW! I GONNA EAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SIX MONTHS! I GONNA CATCH THE LOONY IN MY MOUTH! YES I AM! HERE I GO, THEN... JAWS AKIMBO....
WAAAAAAHH
SOMETHING YOU'VE OVERLOOKED, MONSTER!!! NOT ONLY IS YOUR GRUB NOT ALONE.... IT'S....
CHUNG
ACK!
...TINNED!
EVEWY TIME... EVEWY FWIGIN' TIME...
BWA!
I BET THE LOONY HAS COME BACK FOR MY FABULOUS, ALL-SEEING EYE!
THAAY! LOOKY WHAT WE GOT HERE! ITH THAT GROTH LOONY AN' OL' FRED OKTUP, AN' A TOOTHLETH OL' MONTHTER!
THO, WE MEET AGAIN JETMAN! AN' ITH TIME YOU TOLD UTH YOUR REATHON FOR THIS BIG URGE TO OWN THE 'EYE OF OKTUP' THAT MITHTER OKTUP HATH, AN' WHY YOU KEEP COMIN' BACK TO THEE THE MONTHTER, AN' WHY YOUR PLANET, 'EARTH', ITH KEEPING THO THTUM!
HAH!
'COS THIS HERE EYE OF OKTUP WILL MAKE MY PLANET, EARTH, VERY BIG AND POWERFUL, AND I'M THE GUY WHO FOUND IT, AND I LIKE MONSTERS
SO THERE!
AARGH!
POP
IN FACT... THIS HERE EYE IS SO POWERFUL THAT I COULD WIPE OUT THE WHOLE LOT OF YOU WITH NO BOTHER AT ALL...
WOW!
HIT THE ROAD
GAWSH! I DIDN'T KNOW OL' OKTUPS EYE WAS SO POWERFUL... I AM VERY IMPRESSED... I AM IN AWE... HOW MANY CALORIES IS THERE IN IT?
FLEE!
GIMME BACK MY EYE YOU POLLOCK!
..?
AND NOW I HAVE THE EYE I SHALL NEVER LET GO OF IT...
OOPS!
SNATCH
...UNLESS AN UMPARP BIRD DECIDES TO TAKE MY FINGERS OFF IF I DON'T!
UMPARP!
OH, TRIFFIC! THAT'S JUS' DANDY, THAT IS! HE HOLDS THE WORLD IN HIS HANDS AND USES IT TO FEED THE BIRDS! REAL SMART! WOW!
HAH!
FEAR NOT! HAVING SWIFTLY FASHIONED A HARNESS AND SADDLE FOR MY FAITHFUL MONSTER, AND HAVING MY FAITHFUL OKTUP BY MY SIDE, I WILL UTILISE THE AWESOME POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND AN' TRACK THAT UMPARP BIRD TO IT'S NEST!
YAS!
HOH!
?
BUT I KNOW WHERE IT NESTS!
THEN TELL ME WHERE IT NESTS, AT ONCE...
..AND I WILL SWIFTLY FASHION A SPEAR, AND WE SHALL HUNT THE UMPARP DOWN!
SO, TELL ME WHERE! WHERE'S IT NESTING, EH?
TELL ME WHERE! EH? EH?
WHERE?
IN THE ASTEROID BELT!
?

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An amusing, stylish text adventure

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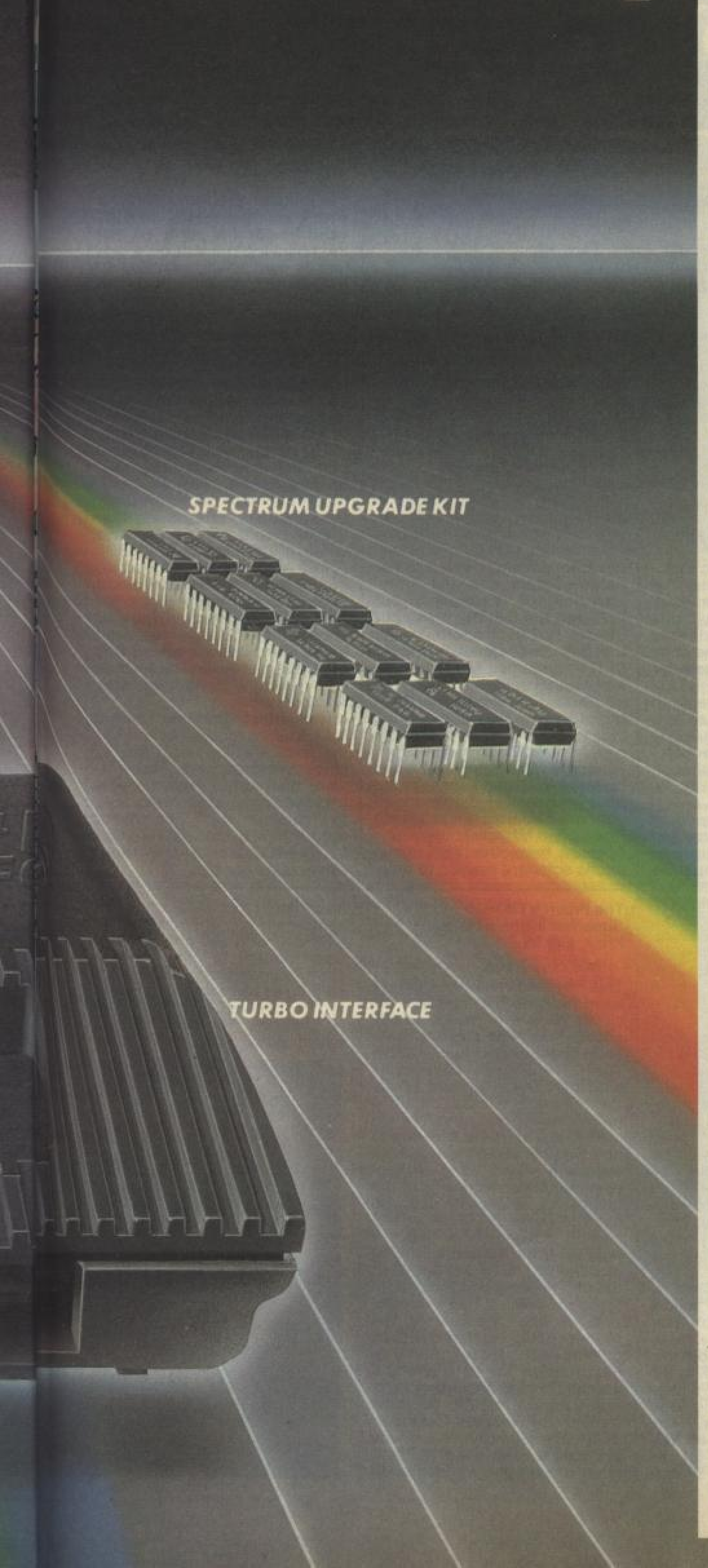
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TECH NICHE

MORE MODEM MANIA

In the last issue of Tech Niche we promised you a review of Spectrum modems. On the face of it that was a little bold, not only because there are so many modems about but also because the manufacturers of them are either **a)** mean **b)** hard to find **c)** don't want to be found or **d)** they never really had a modem in the first place.

Anyway enough excuses. We did manage to decide on the two most important modems to review in this issue and we'll pass over the other for the meantime.

The **VTX 5000** and the **Protek 1200** modems are both front runners simply because they provide an uncomplicated means of communicating with Prestel or, perhaps more importantly Micronet, at a reasonable cost. These two modems are limited because they do not provide the facilities that would allow you to communicate easily with every sort of on line computer there is — there are modems that do, but generally they cost a lot more and are more complicated to set up. When we reach the stage of examining hobbyist bulletin boards and specialist databases we shall also examine some of the kit that is needed to make those connections. But they will have to wait for a future Niche.

To begin to explain why modem compatibility is nearly as big a laugh as computer software compatability, it is necessary to take a look at the workings of modems. As stated in the last issue **Modem** is simply a shortened form of **MO**dulator **DEM**odulator. We all know that computers hump information around internally as representations of one's and zero's. Computers really aren't that smart: to a computer life is very simple, a situation is either black or white, on or off, one or zero. All this means is that if a computer wants to tell somebody that it knows *The Answer* it can't simply shout out 'forty two', well it can . . . but only because the computer knows how to turn its version of 'forty two', 101010, into our version of 'forty two' — 42.

So if one computer wants to chat to another computer it will do so in a signal representing binary numbers, and all that the modem does is to take the binary message and turn it into a form that can be sent down a standard telephone line. Fed with data in serial rather than parallel form, all a modem does is convert characters into sequences of notes for transmission, and decode incoming signals which have been sent down the telephone line, assemble them into characters and hand them over to its host computer.

In the case of the basic Spectrum, which doesn't have a RS232 port fitted as standard, you either need to get hold of a modem which connects directly to the edge connector and sorts out the interfacing problem for itself, or use a suitable RS232 interface for your Spectrum which should allow you to connect it to any modem. The RS232 interface provided on Interface 1 isn't up to the job, although people are rumoured to be working on that problem.

Once you've got a modem attached to a Spectrum and working, the next problem is to make sure that it is compatible with the modem at the other end of the the line. They must both talk the same language in order to hold a successful conversation. A number of variables are involved, the two most important of which concern the speed with which the signal is sent and the pitch of the notes used.

In Europe we have two main standards. CCITT V.21 which is for 300/300 baud communications, and the V.23 for 1200/75. The baud rate is a measure of the speed at which data is transmitted. Typically, 300 baud represents a rate of about 30 characters a second, while 1200 baud is about the fastest speed of transmission achievable on a normal telephone line, and works out at about three lines of text on the Spectrum screen per second.

The V.21 standard is used by most hobbyist bulletin boards and on-line services. If you want a modem to talk to these chaps then it must be able to adopt that standard (neither the VTX or the Protek can). The most widely used standard now being used by Spectrum owners, due largely to Micronet, is the 1200/75 baud V.23. This is the standard adopted by Prestel which sends frames at 1200 baud and receives instructions at 75 baud. It was this standard that the VTX and Protek modems were designed to use. Some bulletin boards cater for 1200/75 communications, however, and user-to-user communication is also possible with these modems.

If you have a burning desire to go truly international and communicate with systems in the USA or Canada, then you will have to consider yet another range of standards. The American Bell 103 is similar to our V.21 and the Bell 202 is like our Prestel (V.23) standard except that Bell uses different pitches to CCITT systems. Modems are around that can switch between all these different standards — but at a price. We hope to bring you news of one of these, the new Miracle Modems Spectrum version soon. There's no point on lashing out on super whizzo (and expensive) hardware if your main interest is in talking to Prestel and Micronet, however.

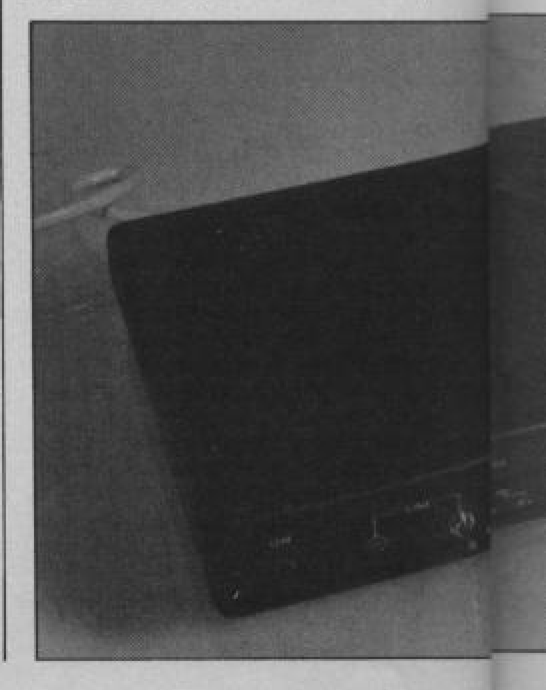
Apart from the communications software needed to drive the modem itself and sort out such housekeeping problems as word length and parity so that the receiving modem on a system is sent what it expects to receive, a further problem can arise from lack of compatability with software. Clearly the computer that you want to talk to and your computer both need software to organise à multitude of functions be it simply transmitting chunks of text to another computer or sending a message to a mailbox on a large system.

The problem is that each computer has a different view of the outside world. For example, problems may be caused by incompatible character sets. Prestel would never understand what a Spectrum SYMBOL SHIFT keypress was meant to mean, but software convèrts it to be sent as a star — that's fine because the Prestel machine knows that the star means an instruction is on it's way. Saves a lot of argument and down time with grumpy computers does the software.

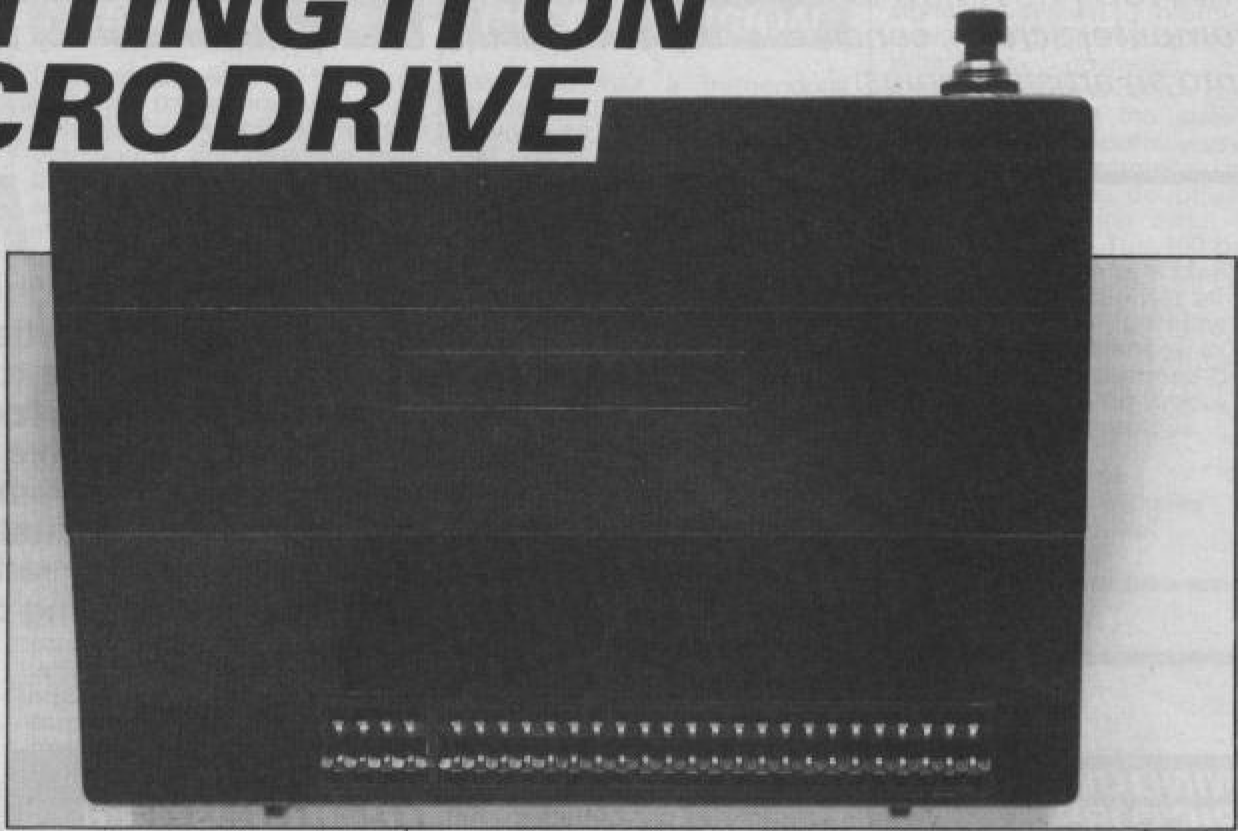
Remember that no matter how smart a modem is, without the software it's just a pile of chips and capacitors. The software that comes with the VTX and the Protek modems is able to convert the Spectrum's output into a form understood by Prestel, and a few more clever tasks besides.

The Prism VTX 5000
Supplier: Modem House.
Price: £49.95

This modem really seems to have become the standard for clever people (a recent survey shows that most clever people own Spectrums *Source: SEOS 1985*). The principal advantages with the VTX are two fold. Firstly the software is held on ROM (read only memory) which means the machine is raring to go on power up so time is saved especially when, as often happens, your connection with the mainframe is broken and you have to re-set the Speccy. The second advantage is that the modem is hard wired, plugging into the phone socket and then the phone plugs into the back of the modem. This greatly reduces the chances of the modem being interfered with by outside noises! The software has most of the functions that you could need including automatic log on and off. Micronet frames can be saved to tape or microdrive and printed out, you are able to download the software or compile messages off line loaded to tape ready to be sent when you are on line. The VTX can be used as a user to user modem to allow you to communicate with other users so long as the same V.23 standard is observed. Other software is available for the machine which allows you contact data-



□ GETTING IT ON MICRODRIVE



Interface 3
Supplier: Evesham Micro Centre
Retail price: £39.95

By now you will have seen a few ads from the chaps at Evesham Micro Centre claiming that they can sell you a machine that transfers any program to microdrive. Well we wouldn't blame you if you took it with a bucket of salt: We did. I mean to say transfer *any* **software, get past** *all* **protection? come on chaps.**

Evesham Micro are not exaggerating, Interface 3 will load every game from tape to microdrive, with no exceptions. CRASH technospert Franco Frey tells me that the actual electronics in the box are pretty old hat, not to say cheap, but the way the thing has been worked out makes it a masterpiece. To transfer (please note fanatical avoidance of the word copy!) a program follow nine simple steps:

1. Attach Interface 3 to Spectrum
2. Load game
3. Find place in game where it naturally pauses (eg stops to display score)
4. Push red button
5. Insert blank tape and hit any key
6. Watch file save
7. Take off interface and load the transfer software
8. Follow prompts to load the game file
9. Follow prompts to save file with new header to microdrive.

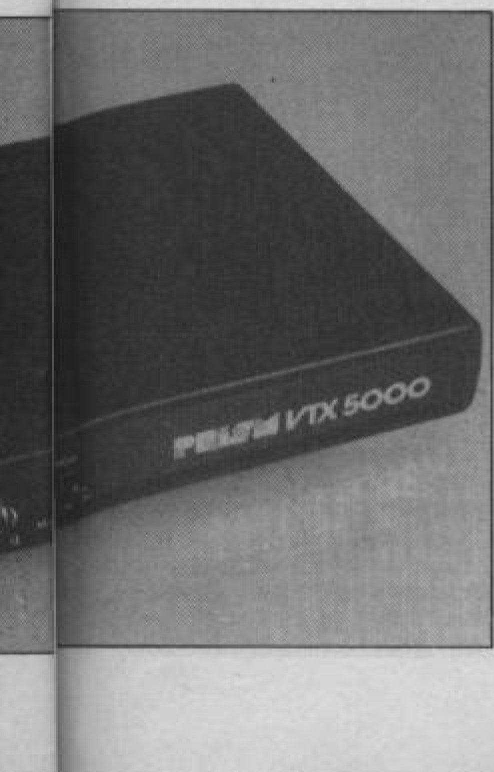
That's it. The whole operation can take less than fifteen minutes and what you get at the end is a perfect microdrive version of the game that starts from where you stopped it.
The device is totally passive until you press the button, so no game can detect its presence. None of those smart anti-hacking methods will work because you don't have to load the game from the start — so they may as well not be there.

The software supplied with the interface even checks through the loading screens for hidden machine code, if there isn't any then why waste space saving the pretty piccy? One other useful little trick the box can perform is to take a snapshot of whatever is on the screen. When you press the button, that screen is then saved as a SCREENA.

At nearly £40 Interface 3 is a considerable investment but as it seems to beat all other transfer systems hands down it is a certain method of getting your favourite games onto microdrive and thus onto your computer in a much faster time. Since you have paid out so much for those anyway, and many software houses seem to do little to help you utilise them, it must be considered a worthwhile investment.

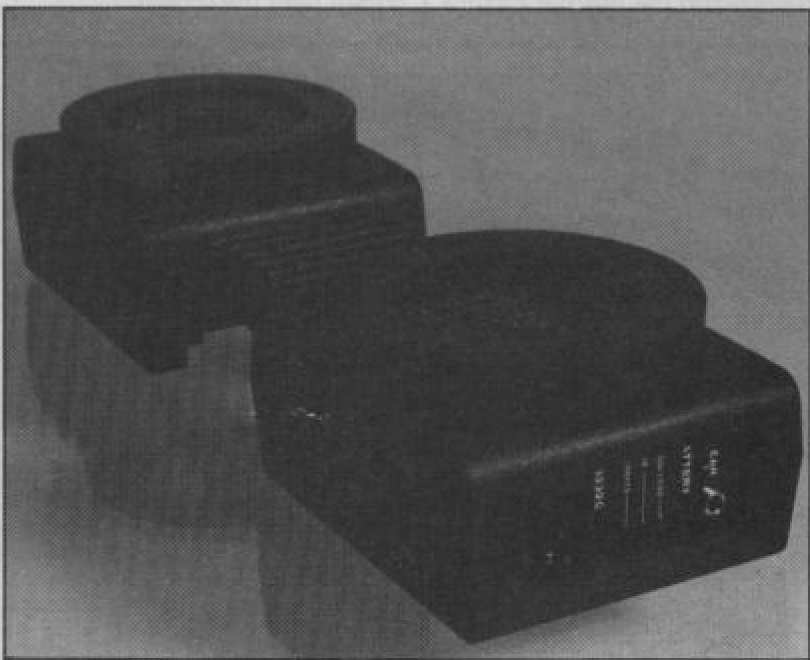
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bases and bulletin boards that use the same speeds but transmit text in an rolling form as opposed to screen by screen. *Specnet* by Stephen Adams costs £5.95 and a similar package by Stephen Gold can be downloaded from Micronet for a small charge.



The Protek 1200 Supplier: Protek and high street shops Price: £39.95

The battery powered Protek machine is £10 cheaper than the VTX, but it presents the disadvantages of having to load the software into your machine before you can go on line. Also, the modem is acoustically coupled, which can give you some very undignified moments as you try to squidge your handset into the two rubber cups. If you have a trimfone or a phone in a style other than the traditional one then forget it, but being battery powered he modem has certain portability advantages (only really advantageous when you get your Spectrum running off batteries too, though!) While the software is as useful as that of the VTX it is not as easy to use since some functions require you to load in the odd chunk. If you want to use the modem user to user you have to agree which one of you is to be the original sender and who is to receive and then load in the appropriate code. With the VTX modem you only have to slide a switch.



Conclusion
In my opinion the extra £10 for the VTX modem is more than justified. It is easier to use and simple to set up, it is moderately idiot proof as well as being neat and tidy when in operation. The only advantage that the Protek may have is that the acoustic coupler could, in theory, be used with any computer that can supply it with RS232 input providing you can write, buy or scrounge the appropriate software to drive it.

FRANCO FREY, now fast becoming a leading authority on how to draw things on a computer screen, concludes his review of the Creative Sparks utility that aims to turn you into an artisitc genius. . . .

LEONARDO PART 2

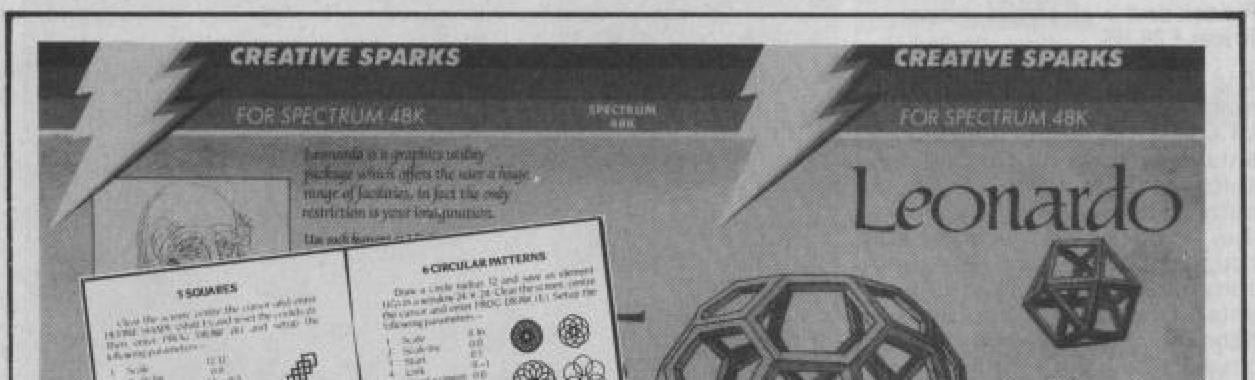
Having got rid of the general drawing facilities of LEONARDO in the last issue of CRASH, several of the more exotic routines such as windowing and the programmed drawing facility can be examined. Leonardo must be the most comprehensive drawing utility for the Spectrum, offering a multitude of options which might or might not prove useful to the user. Careful examination should avoid any disappointment as to how useful all the various functions are and should also provide some help in assessing the performance of the competition.

WINDOWING AND PICTURE ELEMENTS

A window may be defined in the picture by setting the two opposing corner points of the frame. The lower left corner is set in cursor mode by pressing key **2** with the cursor in the desired position, the top right corner with key **3**. To display the edge of the window key **4** will provide a black frame. Key **G** will save the window element into the computer memory as picture number **1**. To recall at a later stage the stored picture, key **4** will reveal the window. Key **N** is pressed and the desired picture number entered. The program then prompts for the display mode. This can be either print, add, common or difference, executing either replace, logic or, logic and and exclusive or operations with the existing pixels within the window. The different modes provide interesting effects and these can be used to advantage. For example logic and (common) can be used to fill solid objects on the screen with any pattern created and saved as a window. The picture element can be used as a brush by setting the *x* and *y* steps to the same width and height of the picture element and after having pressed **L** and toggled the joystick button or **0** the pattern can be painted by moving the cursor over the screen.

MAGNIFYING PARTS OTHER UTILITIES CANNOT REACH.

Magnifying makes use of the windowing technique. Only a small area of the screen can be magnified. The program will warn the artist if the area selected is too big. Placing the cursor at the lower left corner and pressing **D**, moving to the upper right corner and pressing **D** again will locate the area to be magnified. The cursor is positioned in the receiver area and **shift D** will initiate proceedings. Prompts for *x* and *y* magnification factors must be answered and the program will copy the designated window in magnified form. By magnifying onto the original window area the process can be repeated several times.



UDGS AND PRINTING CHARACTERS

UDGs are created in pixel cursor mode with the use of the plotting or drawing techniques described in part one. Once the graphics have been created, the cursor is positioned at the top left corner of the area to be stored and the cursor step is set to 8 wide by 8 deep. After pressing key **T** the program prompts for the memory location of the UDGs. This can be either in the Spectrum's usual UDG area A - U, or into the main store which can hold up to 774 characters (select any of 1 - 774 start positions). X and Y block size is asked for and the graphics are copied into memory. To display the UDGs character cursor mode must be selected and characters printed in graphics mode. This can be done with key **P**, which sets a line of text or UDGs that is repeatedly printed at the cursor position, or key **L** which prints a block of UDGs in various ways on the screen. The function prompts for the UDG memory area (A-U or 1-774) and the block size. The block can be inverted horizontally, vertically or not at all by answering prompts and similarly rotated 0, 90, 180 or 270 degrees clockwise. In fact by combined use of Save UDG and Print Block any area of the screen may be inverted and or rotated.

PROGRAMMED DRAWING

Leonardo provides a routine drawing of figures and patterns. This programmable feature provides the facility for drawing patterns and shapes, singly or repetitive at linear or non-linear scale expansion, translation and rotation. Key **E** displays the Draw Table. The Table displays all the parameters which can be set and is also a menu of available options within Programmed Draw. Each parameter can be set in turn or skipped with Enter. Scale sets the initial scale factor for the first drawing operation with the beginning point as origin. Scale increment is the amount added to the X and Y scale factors after each drawing operation. Start gives the relative position to the beginning point of the start of the next drawing process. Link is the point relative to the start point from which successive drawing operations take their beginning point. Displacement is the absolute displacement for each successive drawing operation. Rotation is the initial rotation in degrees of the first drawing operation clockwise about the beginning point. Rotation increment is the additional amount of rotation to successive drawing operations. Cycles is the number of drawing operations to occur automatically. Three different brush modes may be used. **A** (Picture) is used for picture mode and the picture element together with the mode of drawing (print, add, common or difference) has to be entered. **B** (Coords) is used for figure mode and the first and last coordinate pairs to be used from the Figure Table for the creation of the figure. The Figure Table contains up to 10 coordinate pairs, so that quite complex base figures may be used. The Figure Table may be called up with I. **C** (Brush Mode) is the mode in which a rectangular brush is used if Brush is selected. The brush size is determined by the scale factors and the mode can be set independently. This can be Plot, Unplot or Invert. 4 drawing modes may be selected. **D** (Line) will join each cycle with a line. **E** (Figure) will draw the defined figure at each cycle of the programmed draw. **F** (Picture) will deposit the defined picture element at each cycle of the function. **G** (Brush) will draw the rectangular brush at each cycle of the programmed draw. Last there is a Reset option (H) which will reset the first eight parameters to their initial values. Although complex, the programmed draw option is quite fun to use and easily learned. The complexity will guarantee some rather fancy looking graphics, especially if enough time is spent playing with the various parameters.

SCROLLING

Leonardo provides the facility of scrolling the entire picture or only the part within a window. Scrolling in any direction may be accomplished by scrolling in several steps. Picture and attributes are scrolled individually. Scrolling the entire picture may therefore be useful for settling attribute border problems.

TEXTURE

Cover is a function which generates interesting texture. It uses a scrolling technique. The picture is scrolled a distance and in the direction chosen, and copies itself repeatedly filling to the edge of the screen. The entire screen or only the pixel window is 'covered' upon selection and after giving the direction of the scroll movement the repetition interval must be entered.

IN CONCLUSION

Leonardo has a tremendous amount of functions to offer and anyone with the doodle bug will get lost in the maze of options provided in this package. The Programmed Drawing Feature alone can keep anyone awake for several nights. As a serious screen development tool for professionals the program is too fancy. Here *Melbourne Draw* with the excellent magnifying option for detailed pixel work is still unbeatable. But *Leonardo* aims at a very different user. By providing an immense amount of special functions *Leonardo* can be seen as a game in its own right, where the user takes a very active and creative role. *Leonardo* is very user friendly with its many menus and tables. Loading, saving and creating pictures, UDGs or non screen graphics is straight forward and there is a prompt round every corner. *Leonardo* uses a signalling system to inform the user of the program's condition. Whenever operating, the program draws a colour coded strip to indicate the state of affairs. This is especially useful for the programmed Draw mode, leaving no doubt as to whether something awful has occurred or not. The 100 page manual is written as a straightforward introduction to all the operations and functions of *Leonardo* with extensive examples on the Programmed Draw mode. Now, what about all these competition entries....

Program: Leonardo
Producer: Creative Sparks
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £9.95

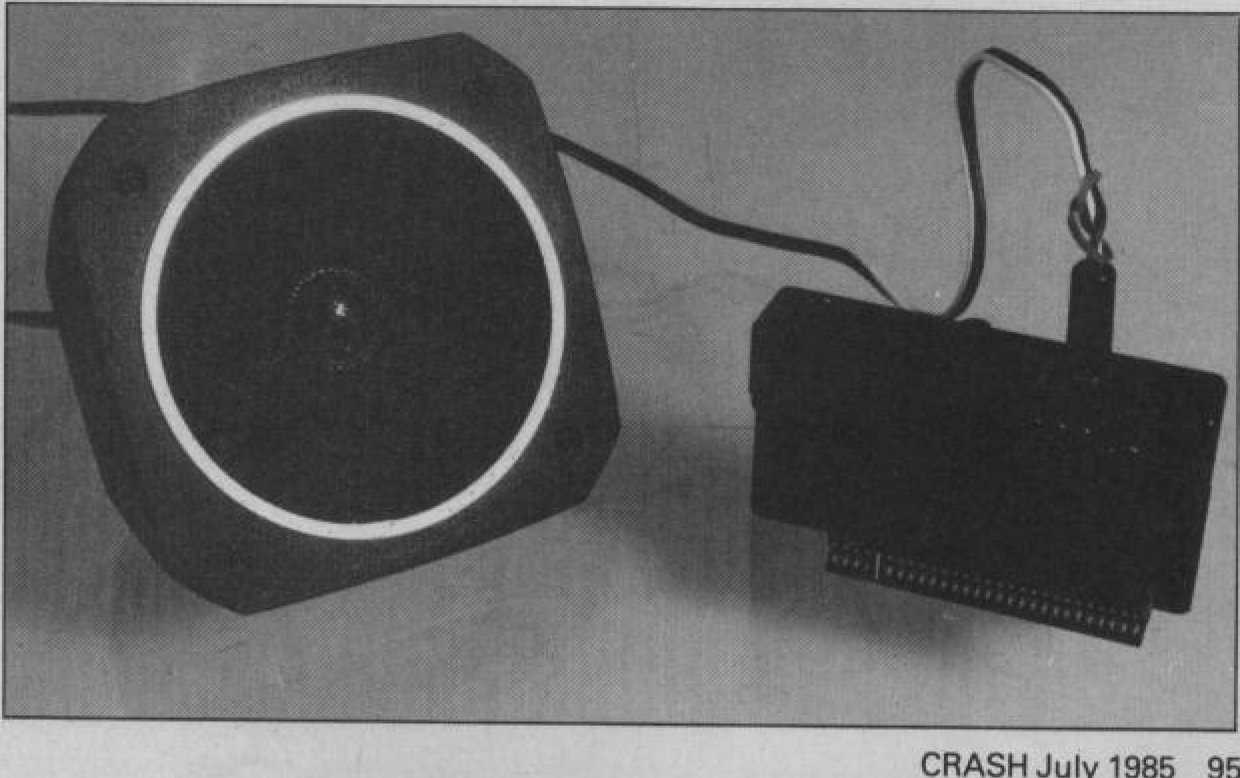
KEEPING UP WITH THE SIDses

The Dk'Tronics three channel sound synthesiser is a fairly nifty little gadget which, for £30-odd, upgrades your standard BEEPing Spectrum to a machine with sound capabilities comparable to those on a BBC or Amstrad. Based on the AY-3-8912 programmable sound generator chip, the unit comes complete with a plug-in speaker and cassette based software to get you started.

The chip itself has fourteen registers, which may be accessed from the BASIC 'OUT' command, and sounds may be controlled on the three channels available. This direct approach is probably not for the beginner, and to avoid total despair on the part of the new user Dk'Tronics have thoughtfully written some software which allows you to interact with the chip by driving a cursor round the screen. Displayed options may be selected with a single key press — or by pressing 'fire' if you've added a Sinclair or Kempston joystick.

Adding a joystick is advisable, as it makes programming sound effects from the screen menu simplicity itself, as the software is really very slick, taking the pain out of experimentation and

The Dk'Tronics Sound Generator interface, hiding a three-channel sound chip aided and abetted by what appears to be a converted car speaker....

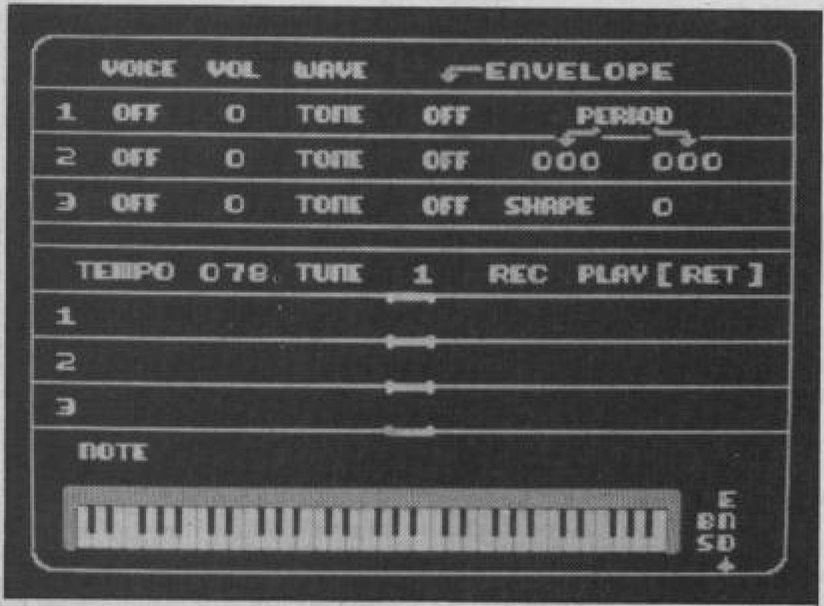


allowing the complete novice to start making a respectable racket very quickly!

Using the demo **Music Designer** software, you are able to program up to three tunes (or sequences of sounds), using all three voices simultaneously and 'record' them into memory. Once you've set up a voice with the associated parameters of waveform (either tone or noise), enveloping, attack and decay and shape, notes may be entered into memory by moving the cursor up and down a keyboard displayed at the base of the screen and pressing 'fire' to enter a given note. As each note is added to your growing composition, it is played back to you, and a simple editing function allows you to space back to the last note added to the stream and delete or change it.

phones. Connecting the output to your stereo is also a viable option, especially if you want to hear the delicacies of the envelope shaper, but be careful. It would be fairly easy to damage your speakers if you don't watch the volume level.

From the musical point of view, the unit is definitely a lot of fun, but it is not really capable of generating the more complex sounds that a musician might expect. The attack and decay isn't quite true to form, altering the pitch of sounds rather than the amplitude (volume), which is a little naughty, and not the way a true music synthesiser works. Similarly, the manner in which the wave forms are manipulated by the envelope is interesting, but not really conducive to really first rate music synthesis.



The title screen from the Sound Generator's musical software. Plug a joystick in and drive the cursor around to assemble your tune.

The instruction booklet that comes with the unit is the tiniest bit impenetrable, but all the information you might require to program the unit directly is there. A little time spent experimenting with the demonstration software would certainly pay dividends if you wished to delve into programming the sound chip directly. Most people would probably be quite happy to stay with the software supplied.

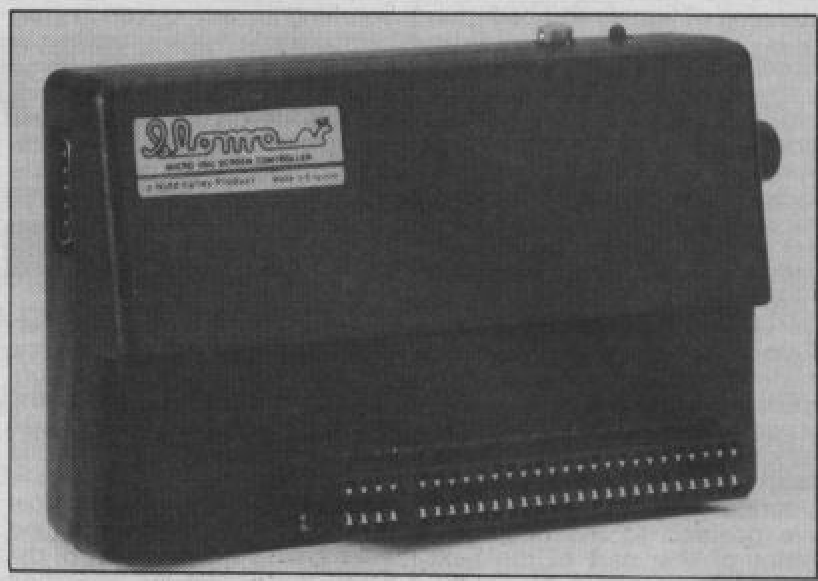
One minor niggle with the program is the fact that you cannot immediately hear the effect of changes you make to the wave formations — it's necessary to keep scampering down to the screen keyboard with the cursor to play a note, which can get a bit frustrating.

The unit itself, quite naturally, fits onto the edge connector, and sound is output via a minijack socket on the top of the unit, which has a little volume knob for you to twiddle. Don't be surprised if you soon get disappointed with the effect of twiddling this knob when the speaker supplied is connected — the output level is little short of wimpy, and is better suited to head-

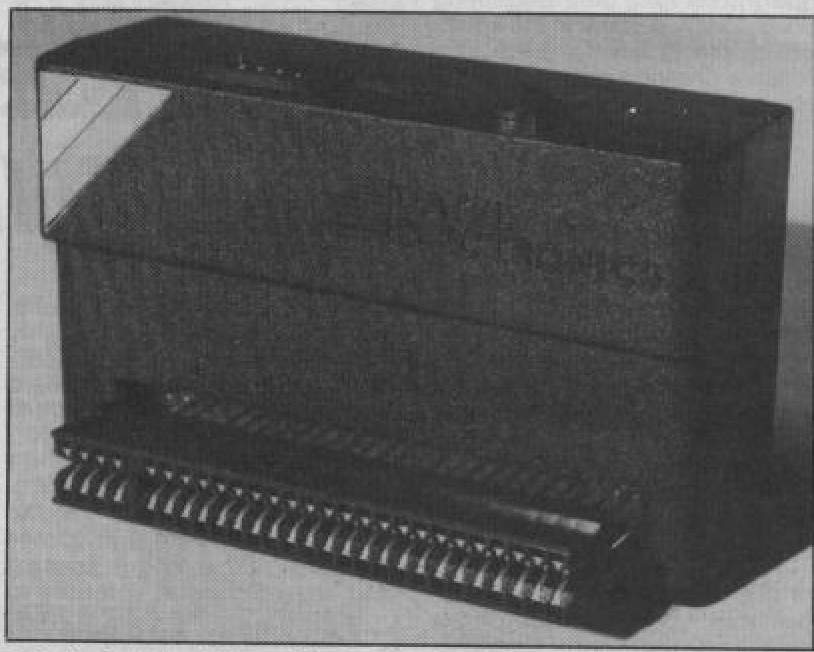
To be perfectly fair, the unit is sold and described as a sound synthesiser, and for the purpose of experimenting and generating interesting sounds (which may be incorporated into your own software), the package represents good value and is well supported by the Music Designer software. If tuneful and more complex sounds are your goal, the Dk'Tronics package could prove a bit of a let down.

However, if you are thoroughly bored with the possibilities of BEEP, and want to go a stage further in computer sound generation, the facilities offered by the sound Synthesiser will allow you into the same league as BBC and Amstrad owners. If you really want to be a computer musician, then there's probably not much of an alternative to lashing out on a Commodore 64, which contains a very smart custom sound chip by the name of SID!

INTERFACE WARS!



The SLOMO Pacesetter: slow motion gameplay, LED indicator and Kempston Protocol for £14.95



Datel's Switchable joystick interface — 3 for the price of one?

Well, we were right! **Nidd Valley Micro Products** were in touch with us shortly after they read the review of Dk'Tronics' speed controller in last Niche to let us know about their two products, the **Pacesetter** and **Programmable Pacesetter**.

They also asked us to point out that SLOMO will crash some programs if freeze frame is held for too long on some Spectrums as the memory refresh cycle is affected — but then so will the Dk'Tronics unit we are told. Nidd valley also mentioned that they have a Patent application pending on the device which could mean that someone might just end up infringing their Patent rights....

Nidd Valley also pointed out that their SLOMO and joystick interfaces are Quickshot II compatible, which it appears, the Dk device isn't.

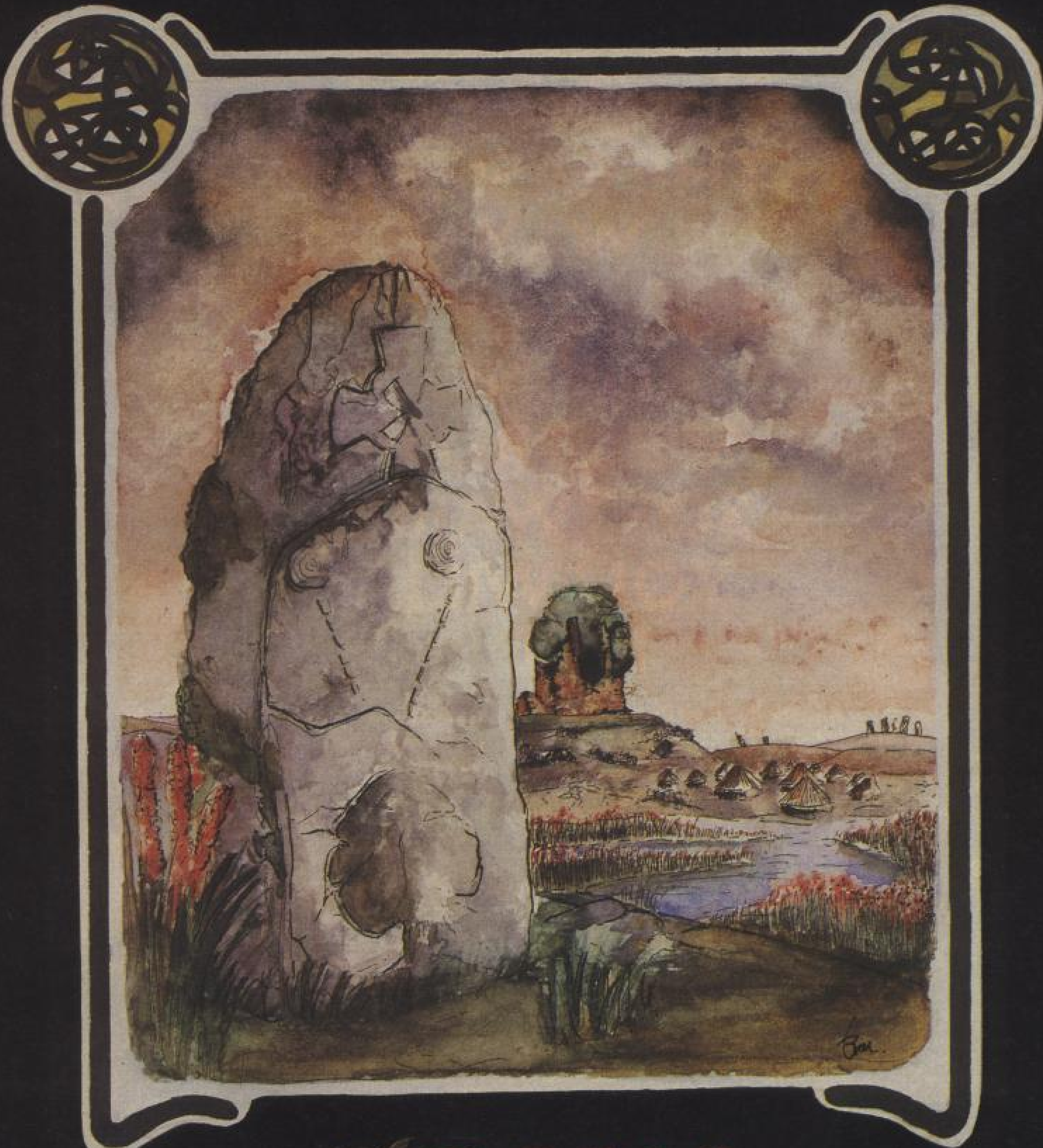
The basic Pacesetter has the LED that Dk's could have done with to let you know when the SLOMO was active, and responds to the Kempston protocol. All this for £14.95.

The Programmable version, as its name suggests, allows you to program the joystick movement keys into its memory, and has the same SLOMO controls as its little brother — £29.95 for that one.

Interested parties may contact **Nidd Valley Products Ltd on 0423 864488**

●Not to be left out, Datel Electronics announce their switchable joystick interface, which accepts Kempston, Cursor and Sinclair Interface 2 protocols, as well as the rapid fire feature of Quickshot 2 type joysticks . . . £12.99 for that little black box of goodies. They live on the end of **0782 273815**

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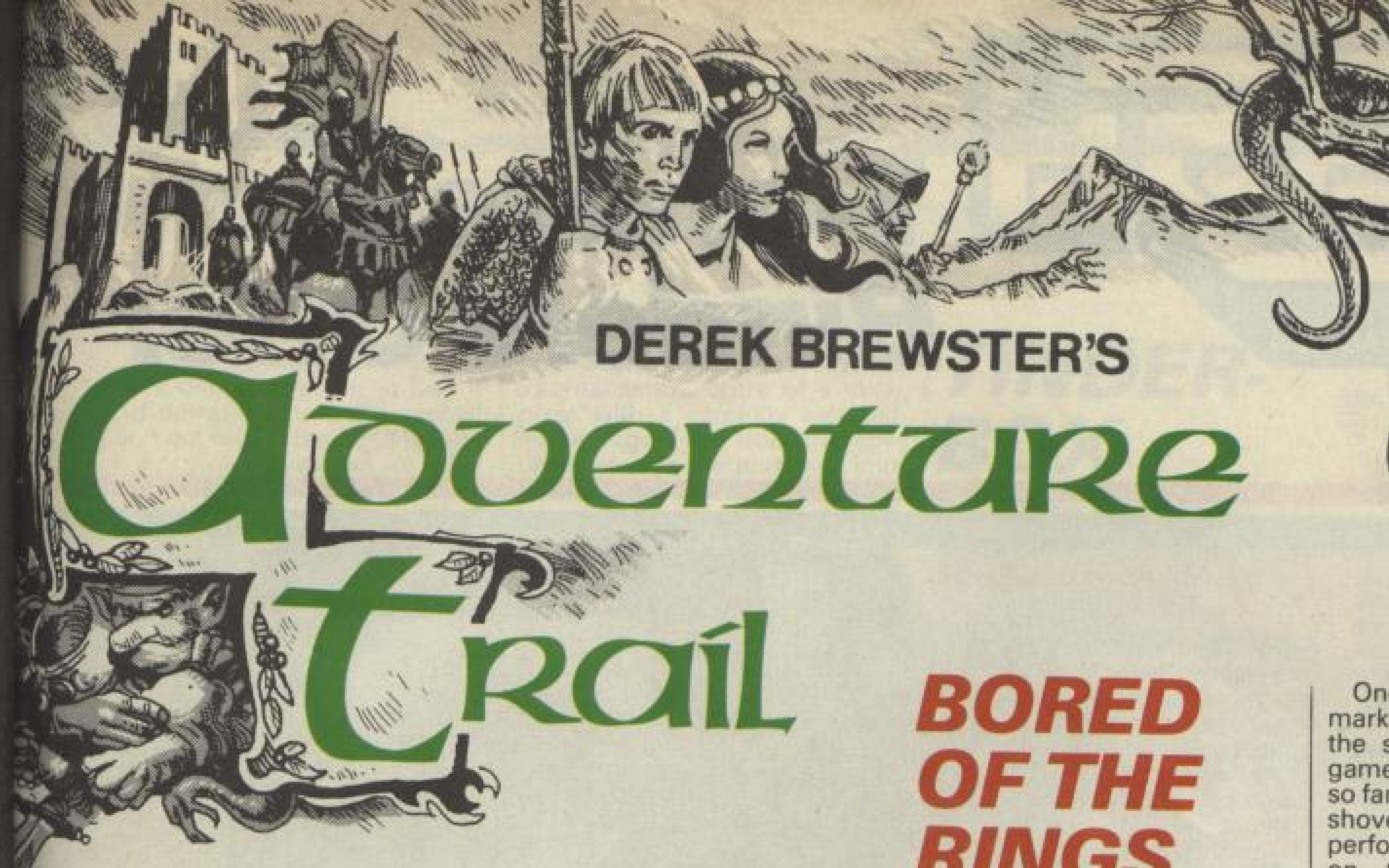
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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

A WALK IN THE PARK

FOR SOME TIME now one aspect of adventuring has become ever more prominent in my mind as I've walked through a local park. This park has a river flowing through it, buildings of some interest, both genuine historical structures and more fanciful follies, alongside the traditional embellishments of a city park — layers of flowers of every hue lining sinuous pathways. What struck me on my stroll was the realisation that every device needed to fill an adventure lay not in a darkened room festooned with the latest bits of microcomputer hardware, but out there in the sunshine and sudden summer rain. Why not base an adventure on this very park? This got me thinking about adventuring and microcomputing and where it was all going. Why indeed had adventures come to be based upon myth, legend and fantasy when they could concern themselves with the real world and all its infinite variety and natural abundance.

I noticed a little while ago an artist featured in CRASH went to all the trouble of obtaining a real specimen before attempting to draw an ant. Rightly, the artist judged no better feel for the subject could be infused into his work than that derived from the real thing. So it is with novelists. Authors, even when they can't visit the real location which provides the backdrop to their book rely upon the most authentic second-hand accounts they can find, such as tourist guides, street maps ahd other novels, and by so doing, enrich the final draft.

Adventures, until greater memory and perhaps finer resolution can produce more meaningful graphics, are closely related to the short novel and it is nothing short of amazing that no-one has attempted to write an adventure which deals with a real life structure or situation. Surely there is an area between frivolous amusement and erudite education where microcomputing can play a part in broadening our whole perception of where studying and work finish and leisure and relaxation begin? It seems only fair that microcomputers should cushion the bumps along the road of social upheaval which leads to the revolutionary world of computers and robots (remember them? They were all the rage on Afternoon Plus about two years ago when discussing the future seemed like a good idea).

How about an adventure where the subject matter concerns itself with a real Scottish castle and a story which gives an authentic rendition of its history? Or perhaps it could traverse a real park (say Hyde Park in London, Central Park in New York or your local Jesmond Dene) whereby at the end of the adventure the player has not only enjoyed an entertaining game but has also picked up the rudiments of some tourist spot.

Two games this month had me thinking even more about the possibilities. Although I do not know for certain, I think an *Arendarvon Castle* does not truly exist in NW Scotland, and when considering the layout of the submarine in *Sub Sunk* I find it hard to believe the author has consulted any reputable works on the subject of submarines or their internal design. It is hard to imagine indeed any author embarking on a novel concerning submarine warfare without first consulting the facts so freely available to anyone with the time and tenacity to unearth them. By and large, considering the high standard of published novels, most authors look on research as an essential prelude to writing itself. It is my hope that adventure authors will consider carefully their subject matter and what relevance it might have.

BORED OF THE RINGS

Producer: Delta 4 Software
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: Quill & Illustrator
Author: **Fergus McNeil**

When I was at tech college taking one or two A levels (makes them sound like long cool drinks which in many ways is what they were) I remember some member of an adjacent peer grouping going on about some great book he had just read entitled something like 'Bored of the Rings' which apparently was a send up of the Tolkien classic. I was at that age (and a good age, methinks) when things like Tolkien and Star Trek were such brilliant stars against the dour backdrop of everyday existence (activities like hoovering corduroys and searching for green biros that work) to denigrate, such was the esteem in which they were held. Of course the years have brought their changes (I now regard hoovering corduroys a perfectly respectable recreation) but my increased background cynicism only gently impinges upon these great works as I still largely regard them as timeless classics (Tolkien the incongruity of believable fantasy, Star Trek a fresh, scientifically optimistic, look at the future).

Now you're thinking, this can hardly be a kindly introduction to a game which satirises Tolkien's greatest work. Well, despite early reservations, I can say this game is mostly amusing, which you might expect, but further, is true enough to the original to be an interesting version in its own right. To summarize, all the names have been changed but the story's the same. The booklet which accompanies the program is broader, parodying other such guides which accompany other such programs. The Foreword and Prologue are disarmingly honest concerning the beginnings of this work.

One or two facets of this game mark it out in my mind. One is the submission of my review game on a microdrive — the first so far — and with the occasional shove in the right direction it performed just fine (elaborating on these shoves, however, might weaken microdrive sales)! Another is a letter from Fergus McNeil of Delta 4 to Lloyd, the man who gets the grams, which is about as friendly as my bank manager's asking me if I should like to 'service' my overdraft. All is sweetness and roses when Lloyd gets a mention but I am made out to be the uncaring oaf who delights in stamping on any game that doesn't come up to the mark and pressing it firmly into the substratum. The annoying thing is it's all true!

Despite the above, and the mention of a rival magazine in its HELP reply (not many rivals left now) this game has got that little something going for it. The redesigned character set is attractive, the pictures are generally passable and more important, quite fast (though the first is remarkably similar to that of *The Hobbit* — no — identical were it not for the chest) and the storyline is certainly a very full computer version of the original Tolkien classic. By the way, mentioning the Bored of the Rings book is no less than inflammatory given the aforementioned letter's express desire not to be associated with the Harvard Lampoon book — whatever that may be.

Working out how the Bored names (and I exclude the mysterious Judith who seems to crop up everywhere) relate to Tolkien's provides much humourous diversion. Can you sort out some of the following? — Fordo, Bimbo, Spam, Pimply, Murky, Tom Bumbadil. Place names get the same treatment with a Brandname Bridge, for example, looking remarkably like the Forth bridge. Other abbreviations include a Farmer Faggot's Triffid Farm and a trendy boddy-popping barrow wight.

Starting the game you are quickly introduced to the humour which pervades the whole, a gentle lampooning which keeps to the character of the Hobbit world itself. Bimbo disappears with a large explosion killing several of his boggit guests while a little later Bimbo and Gandalf discuss the small task of

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ridding themselves of the ring . . . 'and so we'll need to get some dense lemming to take it and dump it where old eyeball can't get it. . . . They both looked at Fordo'. An aspect of play really strikes home early on — the fact that copious amounts of text can be produced simply by pressing any key. This, I am sure, is all part of the send up and makes the game all the more humorous for it. Nothing quite beats that faintly ridiculous feeling you get on discovering how the game allows you onward no matter how clever (or dismal) your attempts — I only hope telling you about this won't detract from your own feelings of embarrassment.

Bored of the Rings is not as boring as the title might suggest and has obviously been construed by a programmer who enjoyed Tolkien's original. Its humour is directed both at the world of the hobbit (or boggit in this case) and more broadly at the whole adventure fraternity. Being someone who has been known to laugh at himself, for example, when munching mint peas and contemplating a pile of screw-in light bulbs, I welcome the opportunity to laugh at the whole fantasy/adventure world in a way which remains true to that world. As if checking the internal temperature of a thick pizza with a carefully inserted index finger (why does this column always degenerate into food)? I make a habit of prodding my way into the uncharted depths of an adventure. This one has three parts. Probing part two I found much to commend confirming what I had suspected — this game has been dutifully constructed and carefully finished.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: mostly quite easy
Graphics: a few but not particularly good
Presentation: nice redefined character set and colours
Input facility: basically verb/noun
Response: instant, except where pictures are drawn
General rating: quite good

Atmosphere	8
Vocabulary:	7
Logic:	7
Addictive quality:	8
Overall value	7.5

TINDER-BOX



Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Retail price: **£4.95**
Language: **BASIC**
Author: **Colin C Chadburn**

Tinderbox is a Softaid supportive product produced by Gremlin Graphics. All profits will be donated to the Ethiopian Relief Fund. The game comes complete with a whole storybook on tape and has options to select the colours on screen and whether or not to display the pictures.

Tinderbox is a fairytale adventure very much aimed at a young audience and is the story of a common foot-soldier and his rise to become the husband of the beautiful princess, Rowella. On one side of the tape the whole tale is laid out before you so making the game itself that much easier and tells of how Tom, the wounded foot-soldier, leaves hospital with only a sword and five golden guineas to his name. Toying with the idea of turning in his sword at the pawnbrokers he begins to wish he'd listened to his mum and become a Civil Servant.

A fortune teller is much disturbed by his presence as legend has it that the princess, the king's pride and joy, will end up the bride of a common foot-soldier. Tom, naturally enough, thinks this not such a bad turn of events and decides to do his utmost to make the prophesy, and his dearest wish, come true. Crucial to his success is the witch's tinderbox which magically controls the ferocious hounds. Winning first prize in the local archery competition impresses the Captain of the Royal Guard and wins him a magnificent lute with which he serenades the princess, winning her undying admiration. But how to exile the king to an island, and how to escape the

jail are problems which lie between him and the glorious wedding. All obstacles are overcome in the end and Tom becomes the Prince Regent, helping the princess in matters of state and ending the king's despotic rule over the land.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: very easy, aimed at the younger adventurer
Graphics: very small graphics on some locations
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: reasonable
General rating: one of the very few adventures catering for the younger player.

Atmosphere	**7**
Vocabulary	**6**
Logic	**8**
Addictive quality	**7**
Overall value	**7**

AREN-DARVON CASTLE

Producer: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
Retail price: £5.95 (Book) £5.70 (Casstte)
Language: machine code
Authors: Hal Renko, Sam Edwards & Arend Rensink

Playing adventure games can become quite monotonous at times when each has the same ingredients and, in some cases, the same problems. So it was with a certain especial relish I loaded up this game which promises something a little different from the rest. The point is this game is so different that for £5.95 you don't load it up — you type it in! It is a book (or just a book if you want to be derogatory about it). However, should the thought of typing machine code listings into your Spectrum fill you with horror, you can additionally buy a cassette with the programming already done for you. Hence we have a Microworld Adventure for the ZX Spectrum from the book publishers Addison-Wesley with an International Standard Book Number.

This game is a noble attempt to totally immerse the player in the world of Arendarvon Castle supposedly situated in the far NW of Scotland. You play the role of a journalist who has disappeared while investigating the strange past of the castle. At your disposal are the numerous newspaper cuttings and magazine articles detailing its mysterious past along with a guide which includes detailed pictures of both the inside and outside of the fortress. Set against the desolate, barren but wildly beautiful highlands the castle is at once imposing, impregnable and invincible.

The rather substantial and crisply produced book contains a great deal to keep the player occupied for some time. A brief introduction leads you on into the journalist's article itself which tells of how the journalist, speaking aloud a timeless riddle, finds himself transported to the castle within — a world of magic and wondrous happenings. A tall man dressed in a fantastic cloak and tall hat speaks to the journalist with a rich musical voice. It is Zazar the Great, most powerful of the ancient Order of Magicians. He relates how by uttering the riddle aloud the journalist has committed himself to a quest beyond his imagining. 'Your task is this,' he goes on, 'to retrieve the all-powerful cube of magic and the subtle spells associated with it'. The balance in equilibrium between the simple laws of Earth Science and the higher laws of alchemy can only be restored by regaining the cube of magic.

A Guide to Arendarvon Castle follows detailing its history along with the pertinent facts concerning The Library, The Armoury, The Bedroom, The Great Hall, The Chapel and The Sitting-Room. Reading these sections is vital for your understanding of this game as within is much that will help you distinguish those areas most helpful to your quest. A whole section is devoted to James Douglas, a most celebrated sorcerer and instrumental alchemist, who once inhabited the castle and created the magic sign and alphabet where the letters themselves are a reservoir of The Force.

The second part of the book concerns itself with playing the adventure and begins with a super summary of the difficulties crafting an adventure game can present, the chief one being communication. This project has chosen a sensible solution to the user-friendliness problem; it lists very precisely which words can be used and how and when they are most useful. A definitive list of 8 spells (eg Reveal, Charm, Disclose) is followed by the commands listed under subheadings such as Door-Handling Commands (Open, Close, Lock, Unlock, Strike) and Object-Handling Commands (Take, Drop, Give, Put, Strike, Use). Each of these words is given the full treatment in order to dispell any remaining ambiguity. How about this description for TAKE. *Syntax: Object-class, Effect: The object comes into your possession, on condition it is not too heavy for you to carry, if it is a fluid, you drink it; if the object can be worn you put it on, Examples: take sword, take the coat.* This detail is shown for each and every word which can be used in this adventure and although it may seem at first long-winded proves in practice to add considerably to its playability.

If you know anything of my views of adventuring you might guess that I most welcome this kind of detail. It releases the players from hours of tedious word-matching and gets them straight into the more enjoyable aspects of exploring the fantasy world before them. It is some indication of the thought put into this game when the authors have tackled the absurdity of being able to pick up objects of varying weights with the same ease. Here this problem is tackled by insisting on a considerable forfeit of strength whenever a heavy object is picked up. On buying this book a far more pressing problem may surpass all others. The task of typing in the program is an onerous one but is made more bearable by splitting the workload up into 7 sections, one for each day of the week, and an error-check which is better then that for BASIC.

But of course, if you feel flush enough to pay Addison-Wesley the additional £5.70 for the tape, you can enter the world of *Arendarvon Castle* immediately and in the normal way. Incidentally, although the book is sold on its own, the cassette is not; this is, after all, an attempt to involve the adventurer in the process as well as the game. But the radical approach of this game and its unrivalled documentation may just make the program inputting labours worthwhile as the game has a special flavour and atmosphere all of its own. *Arendarvon Castle* is only available direct from Addison-Wesley Publishers Limited, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2NZ, telephone: 0734 794000.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: moderate
Graphics: none
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: instant
Special features: program typed in from book (optional)
General rating: quite good

Atmosphere	**8**
Vocabulary	**6**
Logic	**9**
Addictive quality	**7**
Overall value	**7.5**



SUB SUNK

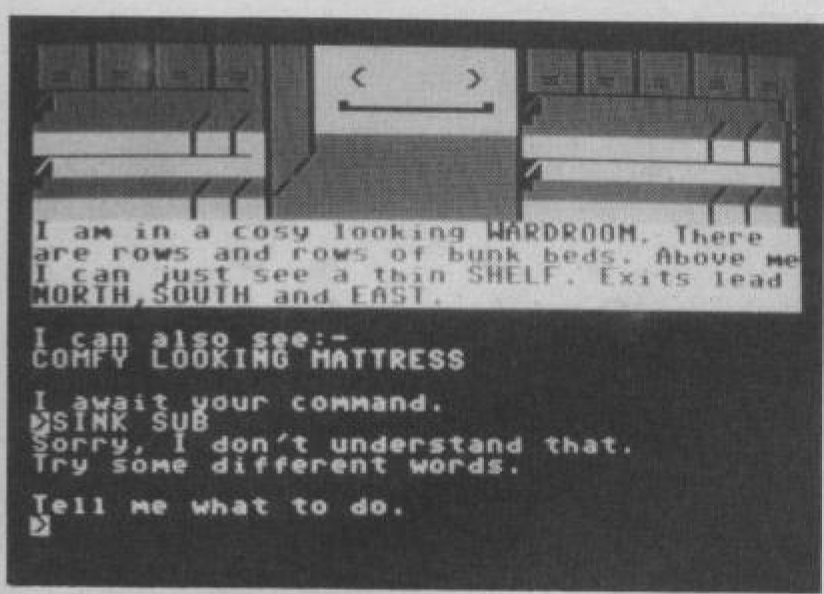
Producer: Firebird
Retail price: **£2.50**
Language: **Quill**
Authors: **Peter Torrance & Colin Liddle**

Sub Sunk is one of two cheap offerings from British Telecom's Firebird label reviewed this month. This is probably the better of the two as it concerns itself with just the one immensely engaging activity — that of escaping from a sub sunk to the bottom of the sea by a surprise enemy attack.

You are Ed Lines a reporter from the Seafarers Gazette on board the Sea Lion assigned to write an in-depth insight into life aboard a modern working sub. An alarm bell rings and before the sub can submerge the crew are overrun by the enemy who fail to find our intrepid reporter hiding under a bunk in the wardroom. Your prime objective now is to get to the telex room to send the message that will bring a rescue party. The message is: sub-sunk.

Up and running, the program has an attractive appearance on a b/w TV, but bright white glares too strongly on a colour set. Since this review is on the whole favourable let's just say I played the remainder on a b/w set after the glare of the coloured instruc-







tions, and in monochrome, all looked well. For an inexpensive Quilled game the graphics are presentable and sometimes rather good (as in the sickbay and the cold store). What's more, in places like the control room, with its sonar display (and bleeps), and in the reactor compartment, the control panels show some life like the flashing control desks which lined every spare inch aboard the sub in Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea ('Captain, a huge octopus has grabbed the ship' — 'don't just stand there, melt 10 lbs of oil and serve with a little garlic').

I must say, for the asking price I thought this game wasn't at all bad. The logic required to solve one or two of the problems was thin in some places and suspect in others but anyone who has played many adventures can soon get that self-congratulatory glow of satisfaction within a reasonably short space of time as problem after problem bites the dust. The balance between getting somewhere and solving problems is about right and on your travels you will find much to keep you interested and entertained. As you might guess the DDDeep FFFreeze CCCCompartment is rather cccold, so much so you are quickly returned back to the Cold Store before you freeze to a block. Most of the rest is freely accessible right from the off and almost all you care to examine, pull or otherwise fiddle about with causes something to happen, or gives an opportunity for the program to show off some new witticism. In the torpedo handling area PULL LEVER and 'whoosh! A huge column of air leaves the tube'. In the Control Room EXAM SONAR to find 'You're on the sea-bed matey!'. In the Navigation Area you can examine the map but the torn bits left reveal little that's intelligible. I can't remember a single location where something new wasn't discovered with only the most cursory poking around.

Sub Sunk is a much fairer attempt to bring adventuring to the cost-conscious consumer than, say, the offerings from Scorpio reviewed earlier this year. The graphics are by no means minimal — in many locations they add to the atmosphere and make play more enjoyable. Almost everything can be examined and every lever pulled maintaining a high level of involvement throughout. Getting out of this submarine is a challenge and you could do a lot worse than devoting some of your Summer hols pocket money towards having a go.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: moderate
Graphics: on some locations, relatively simple
Presentation: poor, black text on white background and graphics scroll off with text
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: instantaneous
Special features: some sound effects
General rating: quite good

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	6
Addictive quality	7
Overall Value	7.5

THE HELM



Producer: Firebird
Retail price: £2.50
Language: Quill
Author: Simon Jay

The Helm, a text-only Quilled adventure, is another Firebird game on offer at a budget price. The game's chief characteristic is a curiously verbose approach to the business of communicating with the player. These witty distractions dominate and dictate the character of the game and it is to the extent that you can stomach such incessant loquacity which will decide your opinions on this game. It is a little unfortunate the game combines such a windy style with a redefined character set which is so difficult to read along with curious colour combinations (like the dreaded red on black) as this slows the proceedings to a snail's pace.

Whatever the criticism that can be levelled at the long-windedness of the dialogue it must be said this game has a distinctive flavour and it would be wrong to assume everyone will find it too much to take. As in all comedy, some lines are really funny while others leave you non-plussed. To give you some idea of what you can expect here is a fair representation of some of the lines you will meet.

'Upon further opticular contemplation of the immediate surrounding environment I find the following',

What would you have me do next your Brillianceness?'.

'Thy wish is my command your most eminent eminence. The task has been completely completed Sire'.

'Give me your next wondrous command oh all intelligent one'.

On cutting a rope loose you are greeted with, 'It drops to the floor with the distinctive sound that only a rope hitting the ground can make. Hit me with another gem!'. When attempting something foolish, like picking up an object you already have you meet, 'Far be it for me, a mere servant to criticise such an omnipotent one as you, but I've got that!' or, 'Although your last command was intellectually superior, I was unable to comply with it'.

You see what I mean — it either drives you potty or you secretly find it rather amusing.

It's not just the replies which get this treatment, how about this location description? 'I am standing on a vast mountain plateau with barely anything in sight worth mentioning except an old cigar butt (probably from the same not-so-litter conscious native as found elsewhere), and one tree (probably not the same one as mentioned in the Covenant Chronicles)'.

A lesser, but no less unusual feature of this game, is the sound, where typing a letter creates a noise not unlike that emanating when a pacman gobbles a pep-pill while ENTER finishes it off with one reminiscent of a pacman catching and munching a fleeing ghost. All part of the humour.

There is a bit of the cheap game syndrome about this one which was not so apparent in *Sub Sunk* which keeps itself to the very precise task of escaping from a sunk sub. *The Helm* has a small sleepy village adjacent to a barren desert and all the environs occupy just the one location. The overall impression is of an old fashioned game, the sort that was once played in order to gain experience of adventuring with the sure knowledge that better was soon to follow.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite difficult
Graphics: none
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: instant
General rating: amusing

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	5
Logic	6
Addictive quality	5
Overall value	6



ADVENTURE TRAIL REVIEW RATINGS

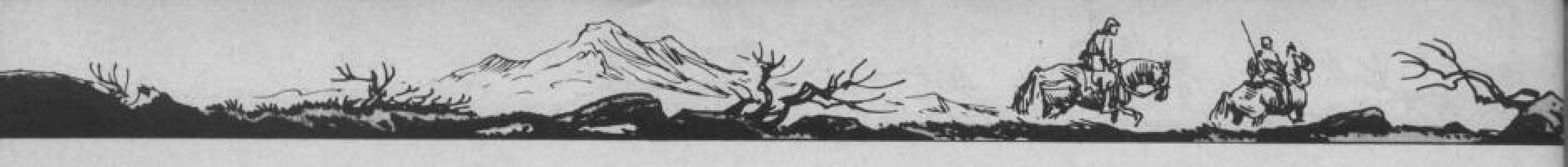
ATMOSPHERE: reflects quality of location description and graphics and how credibly characters behave.

VOCABULARY: the completeness of the vocabulary and friendliness of response. All words and associated words (objects etc) in location descriptions should be included.

LOGIC: reflects the logic of the problems encountered and whether or not you are likely to be killed without warning or chance of escape.

DEBUGGING: indicates the level of crashproofing. A program should not be crashed simply by making an incorrect entry or by pressing an unfortunate combination of keys.

OVERALL: general rating based on price and the other ratings BUT NOT AN AVERAGE OF THE OTHER RATINGS.



ASHKERON!

Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Texgate Computers**

I suppose I could sink this review on its launch by saying something silly like if you're bright you'll get the Mirrorsoft but, don't worry, I won't say anything of the sort.

Ashkeron is notable for its huge size, its unique walk-through graphic system which gives the feel of wandering through a castle, and also, its conspicuous lack of the kind of puzzles which so engaged the early adventurers weaned on Artic games. However, this game is no walkover and the more you play it the more involved you become as it builds consistently upon the charming little world it creates.

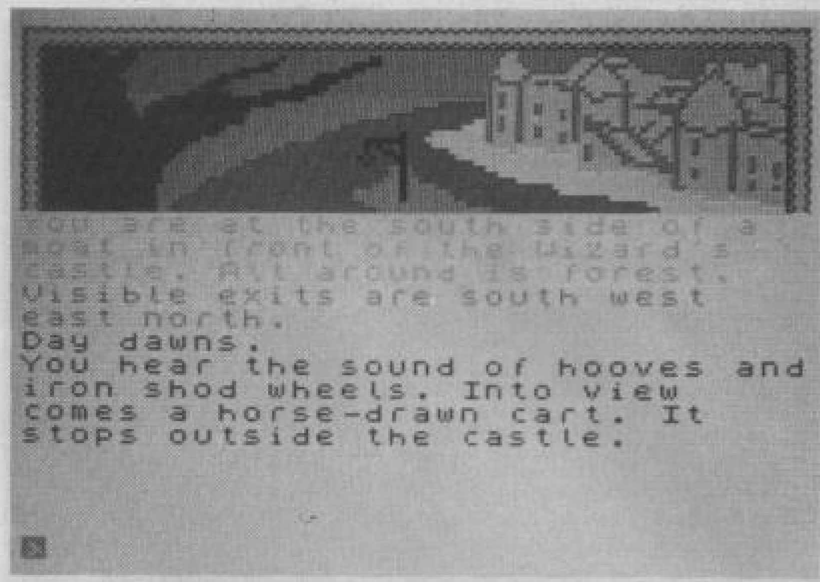
Ashkeron is the name of the principality where a Princess Zeraphina lies weeping on account of her forthcoming marriage being held up by the absence of five treasures bequeathed for the well being of the peoples of Ashkeron. The curse of the wizard in the nearby castle will be complete unless her dowry can be wrested from his grasp. What is needed is a powerful and resourceful man, say a blacksmith, to go and sort out this evil magician and, if he should return in one piece, who knows, he might get to marry the princess and start up his own foundry (sorry folks, someone left that journalese machine on — it's off now and the rest will make complete sense, I promise). At the crack of dawn on the day of the Spring Equinox, the people accompany Stephen (that's you, the blacksmith) to the gates of the wizard's castle. Suddenly, the sky darkens, lightning flashes and a clap of thunder bursts overhead. The skies clear and the panic subsides but Stephen is now on his own.

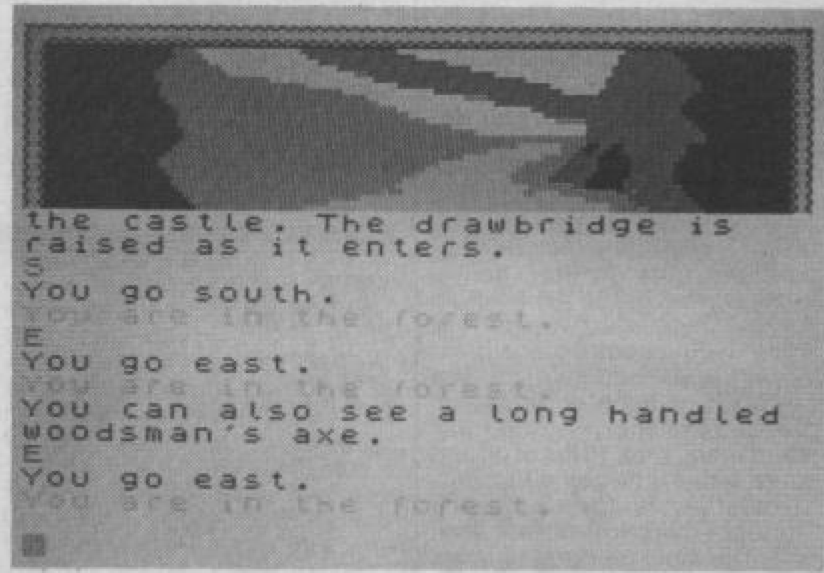
There are two options from which to choose on loading; a standard version or a randomised version. It is some measure of just how interesting this game is to say that the standard game proved quite surprising enough without having to resort to random elements. That said, it's good to be offered a second option where the objects are scattered randomly and the game different every time. An added interest is the competition run by Mirrorsoft to find an adventurer of the month who will be the player to produce the highest score for each month until Feb 86. £25 in cash each month awaits the player with sufficient wit and diligence to achieve the month's best.

The first frame, funnily enough, brings just the sort of puzzle so rare in the remainder of the adventure whereby either it gets solved or you're left wandering excluded from where it's all happening. Here you might guess your quest lies across the drawbridge and through the portcullis rather than in the forests that surround the castle. One little tip at this crucial point for those who end up buying screw-in light bulbs or bags of minted peas, or who can be relied upon to put their feet in it — don't fool around switching the sound off with QUIET half way through this delicate problem otherwise you'll be back on the wrong side of the drawbridge before you can say SOGAT82. Best to leave any fine adjustment until safely ensconced within the castle.

Moving east you notice the perfectly adequate and sometimes rather good graphics which only occasionally stretch the imagination too far toward the abstract. A distasteful smell naturally pervades the stables and the stable boy 'arns that the horse here is very frisky. Exploring the castle further you will come to realise cold, damp towers mark the NE, SE, SW, and NW corners of the building and their heights afford access to the upper and lower levels. Exploring the second level above might be better left till later as it is guarded by sentinels who pose little threat while you are on the move but are only effectively, and finally, dealt with once certain knowledge has been gathered elsewhere (you know, not being able to give away clues causes this column to make about as much sense as instructions for self-assembly furniture). Much more of an immediate threat are the small whispering winged creatures which grasp and lift you high into the air. These creatures left me stumped time and time again — even when they drop you they grasp again as you struggle in vain to make good your escape. Were this not enough, also wandering about many levels is the green slimy dwarf who slices at you with his magnificent sword while he circles you warily.

A very strong point in favour of this adventure is its making full use of the examine command. EXAM POT in the kitchen gives 'Bubbling inside is a horrible green liquid in which the odd bone can be seen' while EXAM BOOK in the library brings forth 'It is bound in leather and is obviously very old'. (Incidentally, picking up the book makes it difficult to read, and once you get into a position to read it, much haste is recommended). Throughout, examining things will either take you further into the intricacies of the plot or add to your involvement, or enjoyment, as for example, when examining the pictures that line the walls of the art gallery.





It won't be too long into the game before you meet 'Suddenly it grows cold. . . You see a patch of green fog, which, writhing and swirling, transforms into the wizard . . .' This passage will mark the beginning of a period of time when everything turns topsy-turvy due to some nasty piece of cunning magic from the wizard. North becomes south, up is down, OPEN is CLOSED and other inversions occur which, if not fully understood, will leave you baffled at your lack of progress. Fortunately, the wizard's spell fades after a time and is abruptly shortened by changing levels.

Ashkeron! is a real-time adventure which not only involves the 'time passes' every 20 seconds (and the occasional graphic of the wizard asking 'Have you gone to sleep?' to which the inevitable reply is YES) but also the real threat of being waylaid by a patrolling sentinel or marauding green dwarf overpowering and eventually killing you should you delay. It is highly professional, sophisticated software with many fine features (you can even use a joystick). Its appeal will be very broad due to its open structure, which can be quickly and easily explored even by the most novice of adventurers, and its endearing storyline set within a most impressive and believable castle ensure that in its walls lies a challenge everyone will find interesting and rewarding.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy to get into, not so easy to complete
Graphics: on every location, quite good though a little chunky
Presentation: not bad, the white background is an unfortunate choice
Input facility: basically verb/noun though also allows speech input
Response: very fast
Special features: game plays in real time
General rating: good

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	8
Logic	8
Addictive quality	8
Overall value	8



This month SIGNPOST has undergone a metamorphosis and emerged as a mini adventure letters page. This is not an attempt to outdo Lloyd's fanmail (a glance at this month's review for *Bored of the Rings* will quickly dispel that idea) but more an opportunity to show I also receive mail which goes along the lines of: 'Alien 8 is great', MP for Information Technology, Bogus Ministries and Frivolous Computer Games, The Arcade, Westminster.

Most of the letters are critical of adventure authors and the stagnant format they appear to have fallen into. Many interesting points are made which authors would be wise to note. On a more practical note we begin with an alteration which will improve the display of the early Level 9 games. I'm also awarding this month's £12 of software for this letter.

SAVING EYE STRAIN

Dear Derek,
As excellent as the Level 9 adventures are, you must admit that the printing is pretty slow, as is the inputting (have you tried rubbing a long line out?) and what about the eye-wrenching black-on-white display (you can't change it to white on black without the border changing!). Well, fear no more, the following program remedies all these problems, and for all the first five programs (*Colossal* through to *Lords of Time*). Impressed! Well read on:
1. Load the program and when finished press break, which returns you to BASIC.
2. Delete, line by line, all the BASIC program except lines 600 and 610.
3. Enter the following lines:

```
5 PAPER 0: INK 6: BORDER 0:
CLS: LOAD "Level 9" CODE
10 CLS: PRINT: POKE 23561,20:
POKE 23562,3
  20 LET V = USR 24572
  620 CLS: PRINT: LET V = USR
53602 : GOTO 600
  999 SAVE "name of program"
LINE 5 : SAVE "Level 9" CODE
24572,29076
  9999 FOR F = 53580 TO
53646 : INPUT X : POKE F,X :
PRINT F ; "" ; X : NEXT F
```

4. Type "**RUN 9999**"; and enter the following numbers (pressing enter between each):-
81, 62, 0, 14, 254, 237, 121, 6, 0, 122, 79, 254, 129, 200, 254, 130, 200, 254, 128, 40, 8, 215, 33, 76, 209, 229, 195, 3, 96, 58, 8, 92, 71, 62, 0, 50, 8, 92, 62, 143, 215, 62, 32, 215, 62, 8, 215, 62, 8, 215, 120, 254, 13, 32, 6, 62, 36, 215, 62, 8, 215, 120, 50, 0, 91, 24, 211
5. Delete line 9999 (type "**9999**" - ENTER) and enter directly:-
POKE 24572,33
POKE 24573,76
POKE 24574,209
POKE 24575,229
6. That's it!
Typing RUN 999 saves the lot (in 2 parts).
To start at the beginning of the adventure, type RUN 10.
To start where you left off, type RUN 620

Nick Page, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Surrey

If ED classes this as a program, I'll end up in the Hall of Slime!

PROVOKING DEBATE

Dear Derek,
I was very interested to see a response to my 'injunctions' from an adventure author. It is a pity that, presumably in order to provoke debate, you omitted from my letter that **a)** it was describing an idea, clearly unobtainable on a 48K machine and **b)** it was derived from practical observations of lots and lots of adventure sessions. I would have placed myself firmly on Alan Davis' side of the argument and found a demand for all those 'frills' 'horrifying'. Well, I was forced to change my mind — they are not frills. The problem is that every adventure author (unless he's in it only for commercial reasons) writes a game HE would like to play. The very fact that he can do so, differentiates him from the vast majority of players. Needless to say, he does not need the user-friendly frills, but surely, he is the very worst judge on the matter!

Quite regardless of the above, the two specific points that Davis objects to, I find rather puzzling. So, all right, being a programmer with no marketing experience I had not thought of printing the vocabulary on the cassette inlay. And yet, the vocabulary IS already stored in the memory, albeit possibly truncated to four characters — even that is good enough. Given a rational data structure design, it can be printed out with the same subroutines as all the other messages. The overhead involved cannot much exceed 20 bytes of machine code!

I am similarly baffled by the assertion that allowing movement in eight rather than four directions is not worth it because of the 'additional routines required'. What additional routines? If you store your transits in the Quill manner, you will, of course, need extra bytes just to store the directions and their destinations. Surely, though, that is just about the most wasteful way of doing things anyway! Why not lay your map out on a 3D board instead? By doing so, you kill several birds with one stone: **a)** your map is by definition geographically consistent, except where you take positive steps to make it otherwise; **b)** your storage is likely to shrink and **c)** the overheads involved in adding the split directions consist of the four extra vocabulary words required and their geographical 'offsets'.

The point I am trying to make, probably in vain, is that up to a point, user-friendly 'frills' are only inconsistent with the programmer's desire to cram as much as possible into the available memory if they are tacked on by the programmer as an afterthought — just to fill in the few spare bytes left. This, needless to say, is utterly wrong. The whole adventure, its data structures and routines should be from the very beginning planned with the 'frills' in mind, in which case the adventure contents need not suffer.

Well now. Where did I stop last time? Ah yes, opinions! Let me rub my hands in glee before attacking a few sacred cows.
1) The advent of the super-duper command parsers was a catastrophe as far as user-friendliness was concerned and should be much bemoaned by adventuredom. The art of intelligent defaulting, forced on the original adventures by primitive parsers, has been lost. Instead of developing in this truly AI direction (as opposed to all the current hype where almost any randomisation of NPC behaviour passes for 'AI techniques'!), adventure programs nowadays conform closely to the image of a computer as a pernickety moron.

Examples are legion. Just take a locked door. 'Unlock door' types the player. Now, in the bad old days the program would have checked whether the player is carrying a suitable key and if so, would have complied. Not so them new-fangled morons! The responses here range from 'you can't' (eh, not at all?!), through 'Please be more specific.' (you mean, I have to qualify the door as 'wooden'?!) to 'what with?' (oh, for goodness sake! The key of course — would I try to unlock it



with my torch?!) or even 'You must supply the indirect object.' (Zork).

Equally, if the player happens to carry several keys, why should he be forced to type 'Unlock door with bronze key' ('It does not fit'), 'Unlock door with silver key', ('You can't' — oops sorry, I meant silver. 'It does not fit.') etc.. Certainly, a facility to recall and edit the last command helps, but in this context, why should it be necessary? Surely 'Unlock door should cause the program to review all the keys carried by the player and default properly. Only if the player wishes to do something unusual should he be forced to explain himself fully: 'Unlock door with paper clip' for example.

I could pile on the examples ad infinitum, but I am sure you get my drift. Naturally, really good defaulting would eat into the memory available, but the pendulum has swung much too far in the opposite direction.

2) A very substantial majority of adventurers do not like solving problems. Contrary to the opinion prevalent amongst adventure authors, publishers and (I regret to say) some reviewers, problems do NOT constitute the 'meat' of an adventure. For most players problems are an irritant deployed by the sadistic programmer in order to prevent them from seeing what else he put into the program. Problems are necessary, of course, but their real purpose is to slow down the adventurer in exploring the world he finds himself in and completing the quest, if any. Like obstacles in a romance, they are essential to keep the player's interest, but should on no account be considered the main reason for the very existence of the adventure. In other words, problems should be treated as tools rather than adventure cornerstones.

Quests, like *Kentilla*, face an extra difficulty here — obstacles are part and parcel of the heroic quest and the player is supposed to cast himself into the role of hero. Yet your average player is no hero and no genius and regardless of atmospheric descriptions and an excellent plot, all pretence of the role-playing quickly evaporates in wracking your brains over a series of intractable problems. This brings us very logically to . . .

3) It is a very serious error (committed by almost everybody in the adventure writing business) to have problems with unique solutions. Intractable problems disrupt the flow of an adventure session (particularly in quest type games). I have spoken before of the necessity to present the player with as wide a 'target' as possible. I would like to strengthen this recommendation considerably. While retaining the (often unique) 'correct' solution, most problems should have at least one (the more the merrier!) easier 'incorrect' solution, so that the player can get through, only gradually getting bogged down by the penalties (of whatever nature) incurred. This is the technique devised by the role-playing game fraternity to resolve the above mentioned contradiction between role-playing and the player's actual capacities. Their conclusion, which adventure writers would do well to adopt, is that the flow of the game is more important than virtually anything else. If players get stuck, it is the dungeon master (the programmer) who has failed — not the players.

4) Another aspect where modern adventures have taken a hopelessly wrong turn is the screen display. The display should be continuously scrolling, one window, text only with object, feature and exit descriptions integrated into the general description of the location.

Mike Arnautov, Flackwell Heath, Bucks.

Why does Lloyd get all the short letters?

Seriously, sorry about the omission; hope I haven't edited out any crucial bit this time! Whether or not I have, I'm sure this letter will provoke more debate!

DB

BORING!

Dear Derek,

I am an avid fan of role-playing games and computers. The original idea behind the computer adventure was to bridge the gap between RPG's and computers, with the computer playing the part of the GM, controlling the 'dungeon' (fantasy environment) in which the game is set.

So why is it as a RPG fan I cannot stand nine out of ten computer adventures? True enough, they give the player the chance to play out a fantasy role, to explore a fantastic environment and to become the hero of the adventure, as well as presenting the enjoyment of attempting to solve the problems that the quest presents. But in comparison to true RPG's, adventures pale. In this light they become boring, anti-social, word-matching affairs with little to offer the player than hours of frustrated key pressing.

A lot of this is due to the limitations of the computer's memory; it would be impossible for a game to cater for every whim of the player, as is possible with RPG's. For instance, when faced with the usual vicious warg, the computer would be able to cope with the most boring and predictable of inputs such as 'kill warg', while 'feed food to warg' would probably result in the computer blowing a fuse. The limited possibilities of an adventure mean that only a few uninteresting things like 'go north' and 'eat food' can be done at any time. This problem is increased by the way in which many adventures claim to accept certain words, but only let you use them when they are needed to solve a problem. Attempting to use these words on other occasions produces such responses as 'you can't' or even worse, 'I don't understand'.

The best way round these problems would be for programmers to concentrate less on memory-wasting amounts of locations and pretty graphics, and more on responses for every input. Think about it, wouldn't it be great if attempting to 'pick lock' when faced with a locked door resulted in 'you try, but the door is too firmly locked' rather than 'you can't'.

A second problem with adventures is involved with their background and plot. The annoying thing about most fantasy adventures is that they are played in a void. This is not usually the case with RPG's, but in adventures many important and interesting questions are always left unanswered. What is the castle doing here? Who built it? Why was it built? What does it do, apart from provide an adventure for the player? There is not normally a background to an adventure which is good enough to even justify the very point of adventuring. Who wants to go around picking up treasure? There must be some real object to the adventure, a quest which the player can genuinely become involved in. This increases enjoyment of the adventure tremendously and brings the atmosphere to a peak of excitement which many adventures never get near. Notable exceptions are *Lords of Midnight*, *Black Crystal* and the *Ket Trilogy*.

Mark Rainsley, Coventry, West Midlands

As someone who was interested in computer adventures from the RPG side, I tend to agree with much of what you say. I fail to understand why many computer games have such weak plots. Also, while it must be accepted that computer adventures can never be as flexible as RPG's with their human invigilators their is no reason why more thought could not be put into the combination of responses. It might help if games designers drew a verb/noun matrix before starting programming (What? — You don't design the game first!). This would determine the response to every possible verb/noun combination. You'd be surprised at the number of interesting combinations you discover.

DB



I have to start the help section of **SIGNPOST** this month with corrections for a couple of errors in previous issues regarding the *Ket Trilogy*. Ian Andrew of Incentive informs me:-

1) To open the trapdoor 'Down' won't work. The ways to do it are:-

a) Use crowbar — but this breaks it, not very good as it is needed later.

b) Make the MAGIC BOOT follow you, go to the trapdoor and it will smash open.

2) To defeat the GREEN SLIME (vital for completing the adventure) you need to get into the cubbyhole and DROP SOAP onto it, which cleans it up.

Sorry about that! Anyway, this leads us nicely onto the many other help requests received for other parts of the *Ket Trilogy* which I'll now try and answer without any more class 1 blunders.

In *Mountains of Ket*, Mark Oakley from Brighton is unable to find the hat whilst S Cruttenden also of Brighton is unable to cross the crevasse between the two plateaux. The hat is BDSPTT UIF DSFWBTTF. To cross the crevasse ESJOL FMJYJS, T. EPO'U DBSSZ UPP NBOZ PCKFDUT. I have received many letters for frustrated adventurers unable to pass the Zombie at the end of this game. To do so you must CF XFBSJOH BMM NBHJD JUFNT BOE DBSSZJOH OPUIJOH FMTF.

The 1940 time zone is proving a difficulty for DR Bebb who keeps falling victim to the black shapes falling from the sky. (They ain't heard of smokeless fuel)! I'd MPPL GOS B TIFMUFS.

Of all the problems in the *Ket Trilogy*, none has caused more trouble than the Five Guardians at the end of the *Final Mission*. M Henson from Leicester requests help on all except guardian III. Well, not wanting to give it all away — to pass guardian V enter UME (UBLF LFU GSPN LFUUMF).

In Zone 5 of the excellent *Lords of Time*, Andrew Fagg is having trouble buying some ale without any money (I've the same problem down the local!). You need the HPME OVHHFU GSPN APOF ULSFF.

A Luckett from London has spent 6 months playing *Wrath of Magra* but has been unable to get out of the valley into the mines. (Perhaps they've been closed down!). If I remember rightly, TBZ CBMBBN JO UIF TLVMM DBWF.
In *Kentilla*, S Cruttenden is having trouble opening the chest in Tylon's bedroom — he has the gold key but the lock is stiff and will not turn. ZPV OFFE UP TUSFOHIUFO UIF LFZ ! EJQ LFZ JOUP HSFFO MJRVJE.
Further on, M Ferrer of Brierley Hill, West Midlands is finding it difficult to cross the bridge guarded by the Darg-vool. Try TBZ UP FMWB 'TIPPU EBSH'. In the *Black Tower* James Steele Mills is unable to pass the Ward of Disintergration. To pass TBZ TBHBHPP, IJU XBSE XJUI TUBGG.

One game I'm always answering questions on is *The Hobbit*. No matter which way I solve a problem I get a postbag full of better solutions. Anyway, taking the risk — Andy Davies of Doncaster is searching for a way through the trapdoor in the Elvenkings Dungeon without breaking his neck. I would XFBS SJOH, FOUFS BO FNQUZ CBSSFM BOE XBJU. In the same game Richard Down has got past the bulbous eyes but is unable to cross the river. HP UP SJWFS, UISPX SPQF.

The brilliant new game *Gremlins* from Adventure International has proved very popular this month. Stephen Cowe from Sunderland is struggling with that Gremlin who throws the darts. You need UIF LOJGF. On the roads around the town numerous explorers have fallen victim to the unstoppable snowplough. To sabotage the plough you need the UPSDI BOE JHQJUFS. With them XFME TOPX.

Finally, can anyone help out M Vickery who has collected the Holy Grail but cannot get past the White Rabbit (I wonder what the game could be?).

MORE ZAPPING

Dear Derek,
In my humble opinion graphic adventures are better than text, but this is only because they're more visually exciting. The perfect adventure would be a text one but including more interesting displays.

A redefined text is necessary and with good use of colour, dark green paper for forest, yellow and red for a sun-scorched desert etc. Graphic borders are lovely. Ones like *Avalon* and *Dragontorc* use, perhaps varying between areas; a rocky effect for caves or if you enter a wood it could show trees, but without having any relevance to the text. Inventories and suchlike should be presented in more interesting styles — on scrolls maybe? Maps, diagrams, pictures, engravings and things could be presented graphically, that livens things up.

Special effects could work. The message 'You are struck by a sword' could flash rapidly, accompanied by nasty, zapping noises. Other actions such as collecting, opening or eating could have their own little sounds.

Other such ideas will undoubtedly emerge, so come on programmers, make your adventures more lively, more colourful, and more fun!

You've not passed much comment on arcade adventures have you? My opinion is that some are quite unbelievable, but are certainly not adventures. What are *Tir Na Nog* and *Avalon* doing in the charts? In *Avalon* I find 85% of it pure arcade action!
Mike, Okehampton, Devon

I was going to review *Dragontorc*, but my arcade skills weren't up to scratch — hence I'm sticking to the more sedate world of text adventures! The fact that arcade adventures reside in the charts has little to do with me, it's simply that you and other Trail readers have voted for them!
DB



Getting it taped....

MAGNETIC M

Tape magazines aren't small beer nowadays. *Argus Press Software* publishes two titles for the Spectrum, and also covers the Atari, Commodore, Amstrad and MSX. If you added up all the tapes duplicated by *APS* for all the issues of its magnetic magazines in a year, the figure you'd end up would be very

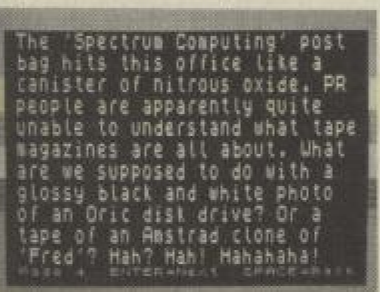
Shortly after the first home computer that could load from and save to cassette tape came into being, you can be sure that some bright spark had the idea of producing a magazine or club newsletter in software.

The Americans started the ball rolling, with a couple of magazines appearing on tape in the late seventies — and there's never been a shortage of program listings in conventional computer mags for keenies to type in for themselves. Some listings publishers offer their readers the chance to buy a tape of ready typed in listings too as a supplement to the printed publication. It wasn't until 1983, however, with the launch of *Spectrum Computing* and *16†48* that Spectrum owners were given the chance to leap on the magnetic bandwaggon.

Argus Press led the field, putting out the first issue of *Spectrum Computing* early in the year, and they were followed by an independent company, **Magnetic Magazines Ltd** who began publishing *16/48*, and then sold the magazine to Argus Press after ten issues. Thus the two main cassette publications are now produced indirectly by a mainstream paper-and-ink publisher, but three independent tape magazines for the Spectrum are alive and kicking. *MSWM* (*MicroSoftWareMagazine*) is produced in Moseley, Birmingham, by **Infinite Software**; *Magnetic Mag* lives incommunicado in Romford, Essex and a new title for youngsters, *Kiddisoft* is being produced in Cornwall.

As a medium for publishing news, views and gossip, cassette tape isn't that wonderful — you'd need an awful lot of tapes to store one issue of CRASH, and it's not that easy to flip through a cassette mag in the bath or on the bus . . . no, we're not too worried here in CRASH Towers.

But they do have a definite advantage in that programs contained in a tape mag are loaded straight into the computer — no longer do you have to spend hours typing in a tedious magazine listing only to find that the gumby who wrote the game managed to diddle £20 out of the magazine publishers for a rotten game not worth the wear and tear your keyboard suffered during the inputting. No, it's all there, up front and loaded straight into your machine — and the commercially produced titles are now filling a gap in the software market, publishing quite good games that might otherwise never have seen the inside of more than a couple of Spectrum RAM chips.



Ho ho lolo, the Santa of SPECTRUM COMPUTING, makes a point familiar to magazine editors everywhere.

'Programmers of intermediate ability can't sell their work very easily', commented Roy Gibson, big cheese on *Spectrum Computing*, 'and we provide an alternative outlet to magazine listings. It's the same idea as printing the listings, but at least all our readers get to see a program we publish in the magazine. Not everyone will go to the bother of typing in a listing published by a conventional magazine'.

In many ways, tape magazines tend to be more 'clubby' in nature than their printed counterparts. *MSWM* is published by the **Microsoftware Club** in Moseley and is meant to be a means of communication between club members — 'one thing that we all have in common is that we all own a Spectrum, an ideal means of communication' as they say them selves in Issue 6. As with all magazines, the tape 'zines encourage readers' letters, and there's quite a lively exchange of tips and hints to be found in all of them. *MSWM* has a deliberate policy of leaving all their programs in listable form, and of filling them with REMarks. Readers are encouraged to break into the software, examine it and learn more about their machines as a result.

The content of the *MSWM* magazines that we got to see was generally interesting and strongly reflected the club nature of the publication. Their readers merrily swop hints and tips and send out appeals for help via the magazines 'pages', while the editorial team provide features on programming and getting the most out of your Spectrum. There's a positive 'we're all in this together' club feel to *MWSM*, and it makes you want to join in. . . .

And that's perhaps the major appeal of tape 'zines — they are an ideal medium for communicating slightly more technical information, as a tutorial feature can actually demonstrate the theory as part of the presentation rather than relying on the reader to type in acres of code, debug it and then refer back to the printed page. The straight entertainment side, games programs, reviews and editorial pieces themselves are not exactly rubbish, either. . . .



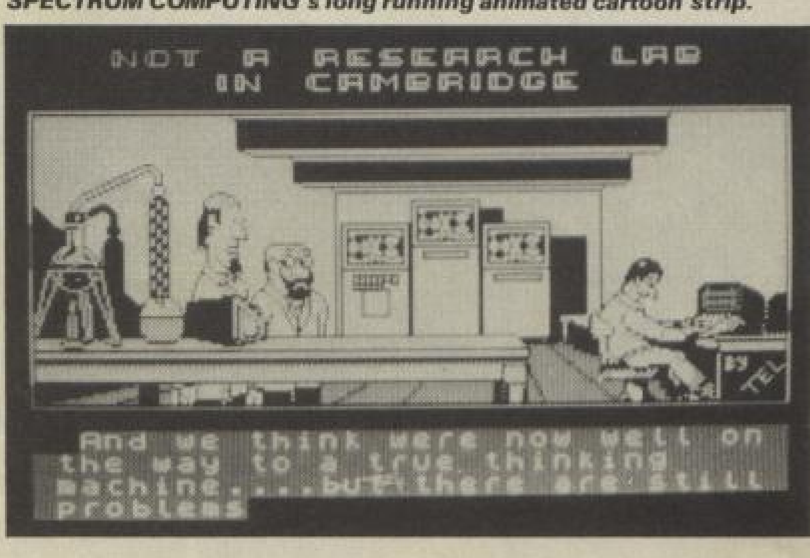
The great tit. Need we say more? Should we say more? From the KIDDISOFT Nature trail.

Roger Swift, who started *16†48* and now produces it for Argus Press Software pays between £20 and £100 for a program published in his magazine: We provide an outlet for games which are not mega-games, and are becoming a market for people who can write games which provide our readers with an example of what they could do on their computers. Nowadays I'm rejecting material that I'd have been delighted to receive a year ago — the standard of submitted work has improved enormously.'

And Roy Gibson of *Spectrum Computing* takes a similar view: 'The amount of material generated for the Spectrum is massive, and we fill a nice little gap between the Top Ten commercial aspirants and the type-it-in-yoursélf-from-a-magazine-listing brigade.'

Magnetic Mag remains firmly anonymous — their 'phone number is ex-directory, and two

SPECTRUM COMPUTING's long running animated cartoon strip.



MAGNETIC MEDIA BARONS

Argus Press Software
Liberty House
222 Regent Street
London W1R 7DB
Spectrum Computing — £3.99
16/48 — £3.25

Infinite Software
73 Alcester Road
Moseley
Birmingham 13
MSWM — £2.99

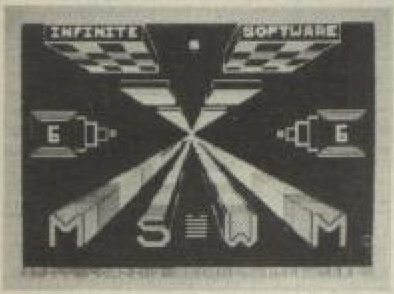
Magnetic Mag
39 Priest's Avenue
Romford
Essex RM1 4RJ
Magnetic Mag — £2.50

Kiddisoft
5 Nanpusker Road
Hayle
Cornwall
TR27 5JR
Kiddisoft — £3.99

MAGAZINES

big indeed. Big enough to make them one of the largest software houses around.

Three other fish swim in the Spectrum tape magazine sea as well, so we take a look at no less than five potential competitors on these pages . . . fearless ain't we?



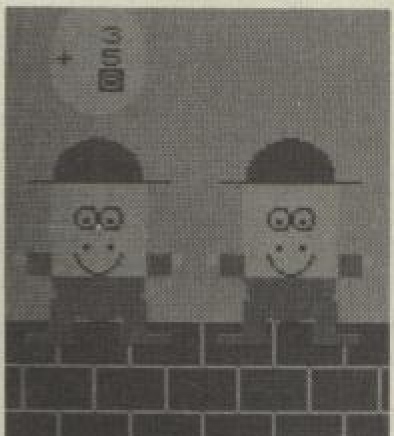
In case you couldn't work it out, the title screen from MSWM.

separate letters failed to elicit any kind of response from them. You might, therefore, be a little reluctant to send off the £2.50 they ask for an issue! Enough of them!

The lady behind *Kiddisoft* is, however, quite happy to answer the 'phone and explained that her magazine is a new venture, aimed at youngsters between the ages of four and eight. Anne Menneer has a degree in Psychology and is a trained teacher too. Her tape magazine is intended as a comic: 'slightly educational, and fun', and should come out monthly after the first few issues.

'Edu-tainment' is one of those horrible compound American words used to describe entertaining educational programs. And in a way that's what *Kiddisoft* sets out to provide in a magazine format. Overall, Issue 1 is a jolly package of games, which could do with a bit of polishing — while the graphics in some of the games could do with a little more thought (or programming skill), the game content was good. The simplified adventure, which asks the player to choose between options rather than dream up and input commands, was particularly attractive, with pretty graphics and an appealing storyline, if a little repetitive (you could visit and re-visit corners of the program endlessly, doing the same thing every time).

The first issue of the *Kiddisoft* magazine is indeed a worthy pilot. All the programs are in BASIC, and have been written 'in house'. Once the magazine builds up a readership and starts receiving programs and letters from outside contributors it could easily make quite a comfortable niche for itself in the educational market. Meantime, we're passing our copy over to Rosetta McLeod. . . .



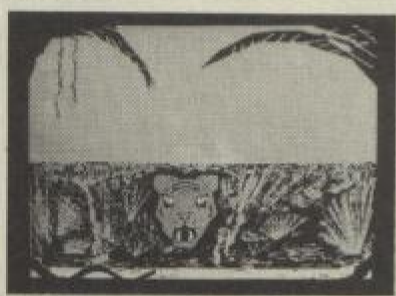
Save the KIDDISOFT Humpties: get the sum right, and Humpty won't fall!

The balloon game — a cheerful little challenge from KIDDISOFT.



16/48 is a monthly magazine, and as its title suggests, is aimed at both users of the 16 and 48K machines. Roger Swift set it up back in 1983 and published ten issues of the magazine before deciding to accept Argus's offer to buy out the title — largely because the business side of the operation became too much hassle.

16/48 is put together every month by Roger and two colleagues — an adventure columnist and graphics whizz by the name of Yaz, and Barry, who writes the serial adventure *Ludoids* and the odd piece of machine code. And of course, there are the readers' contributions.



16/48 — a shot from the latest instalment of their serial adventure, LUDOIDS.

The Ludoids adventure is a particularly neat idea on the part of *16/48* — a 48K text with graphics adventure which started in issue 14. You can play each month's game on its own, but can play through the serial as you are given a code on successful completion of each month's instalment which you can use to kick off with on the next 'chapter'. And of course the magazine is in a strong position when it comes to offering help on previous chapters of the continuing adventure. . . .

Despite the title, *16/48*, like the majority of Spectrum tape magazines no longer worries too much about having to cater for owners of the 16K machine — there's not that many of you left, it seems!

The June issue contained the usual editorial and contents pages, reviews, a crossword and competition, and a continuation of the magazine's machine code course. A neat explosion routine was also supplied, explained and demonstrated, and offered as a utility for inclusion in readers' programs.

On the games front, a competently programmed machine code platform game lived on side One, which lost out on playability a bit by being too pernickety, and a golf simulation lurked on side Two which *could* have provided hours of enjoyment for some people. . . .

The May/June issue of *Spectrum Computing* which is about to go monthly, was slightly better equipped with games, featuring a neat and compelling machine code arcade game called *Piggy* , a rather pretty but fiendishly difficult maze game and a very tidy implementation of Cribbage. Why anyone should bother to program Solitaire as a computer game is a little beyond this 'umble reviewer, but someone did, and now you can own a copy by getting hold of this issue *S.C.*!.

Reviews, a chirpy editorial and the regular animated cartoon also appear on the tape with a column by *Wizard Prang* who is the resident machine code expert/tutor.

Spectrum Computing has recently changed editor, and will now be produced from a bungalow in Merseyside by Roy Gibson, having lived up till now in Iolo Davidson's farmhouse. Roy plans to change the magazine's emphasis from a contributor-driven publication to one that picks a subject each issue, and involves contributors more directly in the advance planning of the magazine. Roy makes a point of always criticising submissions constructively, sometimes writing a little machine code routine to improve the original program, or referring the programmer to appropriate reference books.

Both *16/48* and *Spectrum Computing* feel that the core of their readership lies with the more serious Spectrum user and less with the committed arcade player. Consequently in coming months the emphasis is likely to move towards supplying more material on the machine code and utilities front, while continuing to publish games programs as 'freebies'.

Of course, there's no real reason why tape magazines shouldn't include taped interviews with people in the software industry, or indeed combine recorded sound with software in the same devious way as **Softlee Systems** have with their educational software (see this month's **CRASH COURSE**). The possibilities are endless, and they certainly serve a complementary function to the traditionally produced, hard copy computer magazine.

A subscription to one of the tape magazines would provide a regular fix of software and technical information, and should go down well with any serious computer user. But the game player has a lot to gain from tape magazines too — for the price, they're hardly a rip-off, each containing at least a couple of perfectly respectable budget games, together with features presented in a clubby manner. Worth checking out.

CRASH COURSE

by Rosetta McLeod

The rapidly expanding market in educational software is reflected by the sheer variety of programs now being issued. While not all of them strike me as as being of great educational value, it is nevertheless heartening to note that some publishers are now prepared to experiment with new ideas in this area.

One of the most exciting concepts is the *See Hear* range of programs from **Softlee Systems**, which provide audio material for the user to listen to through headphones while watching the screen. Each *See Hear* package come complete with a connection lead for a standard ¼ inch stereo headphone socket, and other,types of lead, suitable for personal stereos for instance, are also available from Softlee.

Using a stereo cassette deck, the tape is loaded into the computer in the usual manner, and the user will hear the instructions for the program through the headphones while the tape is actually loading. This is achieved by recording the spoken word onto one of the two tracks on the stereo tape, and putting the program onto the other track. Although the concept of audio-visual presentation in education is not new, Softlee are probably the first company to bring the whole idea within the reach of the ordinary home-computer-user.

From a teacher's viewpoint, the *See Hear* programs seem to me to have an extremely useful role to play in our quickly-changing educational system. Over recent years, teachers of both primary and secondary school children have become increasingly aware of the importance of teaching listening and talking skills as well as those of reading and writing. Indeed, future exams may actually test levels of competence in all four of these skills.

At present, there is a dearth of materials specifically designed for teaching and assessing listening skills, and it would be valuable if the *See Hear* concept could be extended to cover a variety of subject areas.. Tony Lee of Softlee Systems is very interested in developing software with a strong educational content, and hopes to add languages other than French to his range of programs.

Another novel program is *Worldwise: Nuclear Weapons* from the **Richardson Institute for Conflict and Peace Research** at Lancaster university. This program is not available in the shops, and can only be obtained from Lancaster University. Although it is therefore unlikely that the program will achieve any real commercial success, it is nevertheless good to know that, at last, minority interests are being catered for in the field of educational software.

It seems, however, that it is only the small publishers who are beginning to wake up to the needs of the large number of people involved in education. They are realising that educational software should not be directed solely at children involved in the traditional areas of learning, but at people of all ages who have a wide range of different educational interests. Let's hope the larger publishers will soon follow suit.

A DAY AT THE SEASIDE

Producer: Softlee Systems
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.75 (including connection lead and flashcards)**
Age range: **probably from 4 to around 8**

A Day at the Seaside is a spelling story tape for young children which should be used with a stereo system as mentioned previously. The detailed instructions included in the pack clearly explain how to set up the equipment, using the connection lead supplied. Side One of the tape contains the instructions for the story itself in software, and while the program is loading the user is treated to an explanatory commentary. This is particularly useful for a parent running through the program before using it with the child.

Side Two contains the story itself, *A Day at the Seaside*, which is read very clearly by a female voice. At specific points in the narrative, the child is asked to spell some words. The words can be introduced to the child before the program is used, using the flashcards provided in the package. Twenty words, such as 'beach', 'sea', 'crab' and 'pier' are clearly printed on one side of the card, while a writing tutor for the word is on the other. A parent or teacher can decided how to use these flashcards to best advantage — before, during or after the story.

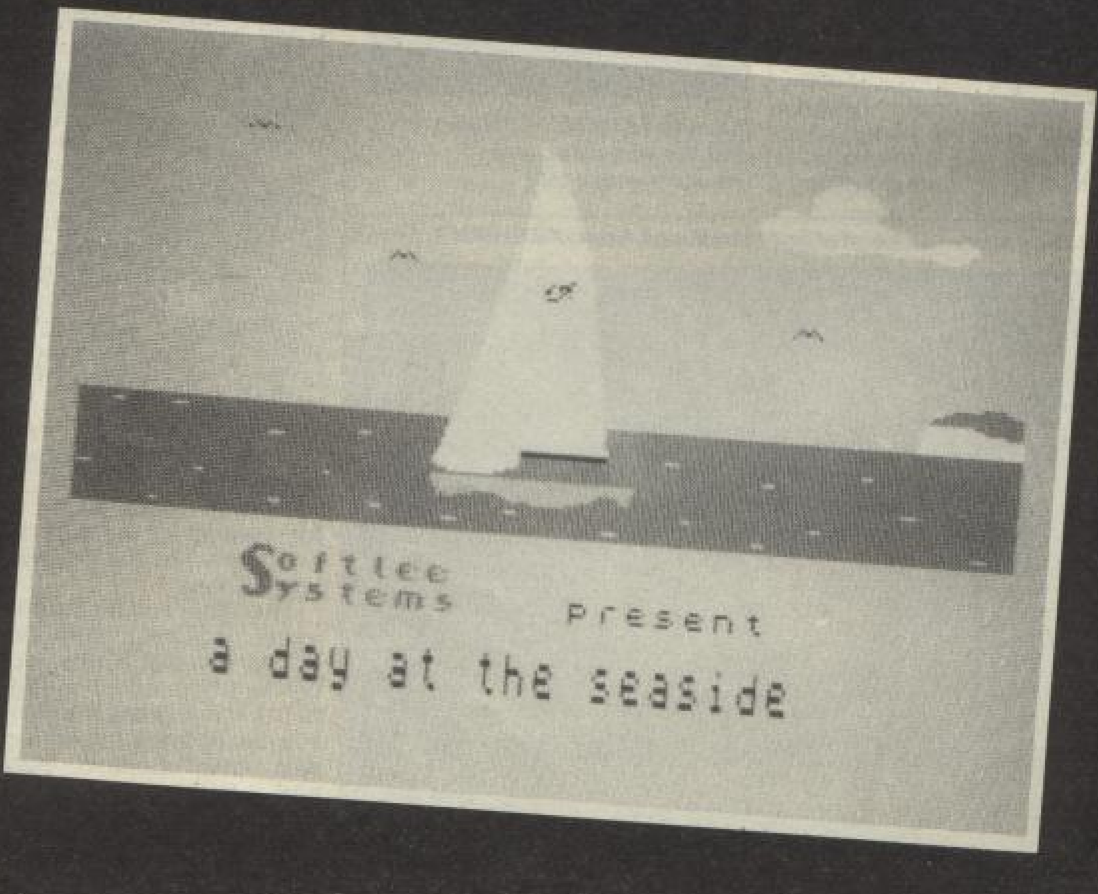
One very useful feature of the program is that, after the child has typed in the fifth word, there is an assessment of progress. If reasonable progress has been made, a further assessment and score is given after every other subsequent picture displayed on screen. If the child has made a lot of errors, however, the computer may advise the user to stop and do some preparation before starting again. In this case, the computer will empty its memory and refuse to continue. Another excellent feature is that the parent can alter the normal lower case spelling to upper case (capital letters) if required.

This program has been very well thought-out and is professionally presented. The sound is excellent and the speaker's voice is clear and pleasant to listen to. The music and sound effects contribute to the child's enjoyment of the whole. The five-year old who tested the program for me loved the story and was particularly amused by the humorous touches in it — for instance the family forgetting to put the baby in their car when they set off for their day at the seaside.

My assistant was totally motivated to spell the words correctly so that the computer would show him the picture of the word, and allow him to continue with hearing the story. His final comment when we had completed the program was 'When can we do some more stories like that?' Faced with such an enthusiastic reaction, I highly recommend *A Day at the Seaside* for use both in the home and in schools.

COMMENTS

Control keys: words to be typed in by the child. No need to use ENTER
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: simple, but bright and attractive
Graphics: clear and effective
General rating: an excellent program which young children will love. The adult (teacher or parent) can decide on the best way to use the flashcards to meet the needs of the child.





WORLDWISE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Producer:
The Richardson Institute for Conflict and Peace Research, University of Lancaster, LA1 4YF
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6 (or £8.50 including the book, Guide to Nuclear Weapons) available only from the University**
Author: **Paul Smoker**
Age range: **older teenagers/adults**

This is probably one of the most unusual programs I have seen. *Worldwise* is described as 'a microcomputer atlas that can be used to study a variety of world problems' — in this case it is the nuclear threat that is focussed on, though it is hoped that future programs will deal with such topics as literacy, food, health and wealth.

The program comes complete with a twenty seven-page users manual which gives very detailed instructions on using both the Worldwise Atlas and the Nuclear Weapons sections of the program. The Atlas holds more than 130 countries, and maps may be reduced or enlarged in the Atlas part of the program.

While the User Manual suggests that individual or team games may be played to test knowledge of the names and relative positions of countries, with the best will in the world, I cannot see that the games suggested would provide much fun or enjoyment, though they would certainly be of educational value.

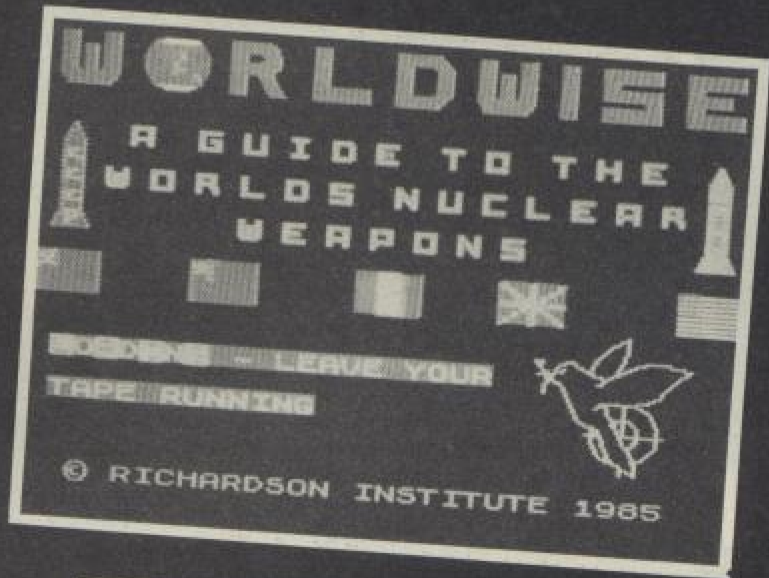
When it comes to using the Nuclear Weapons section, the player is asked to select from the frightening list of weapons owned by the USA, USSR, France and China. It is then possible to choose an area of the world and call up on the screen the various weapons deployed there.

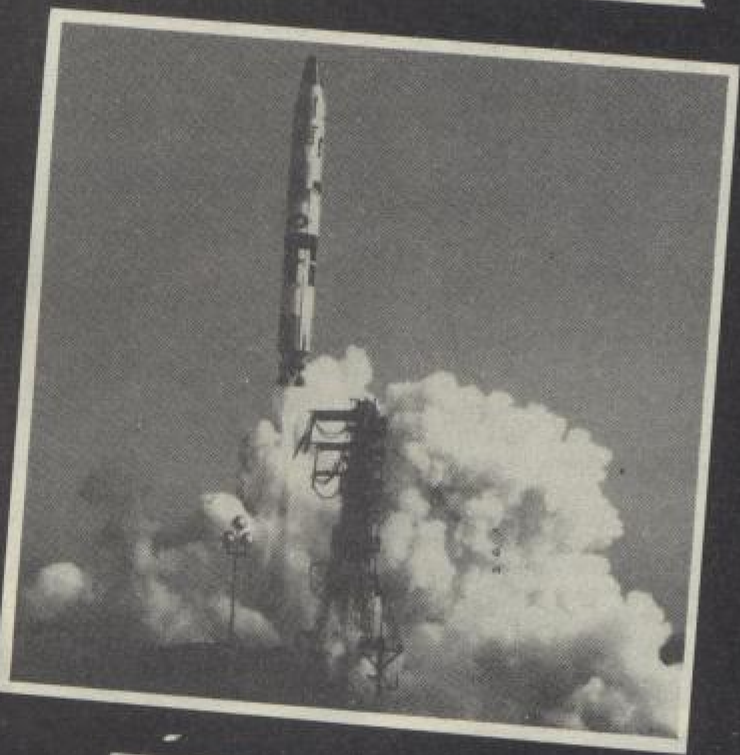
In this respect, the program succeeds in making one aware of the reality of the nuclear threat, and of the proliferation of weapons distributed around the world. Again, this section in the Users Manual is followed by suggestions for simulation games involving two negotiating teams representing the West (USA, UK, France) and the East (USSR, China). These games are proposed for use in the classroom but would, I think, only be successful with the brightest of senior pupils, and only with a vast amount of preparation and guidance by the teacher.

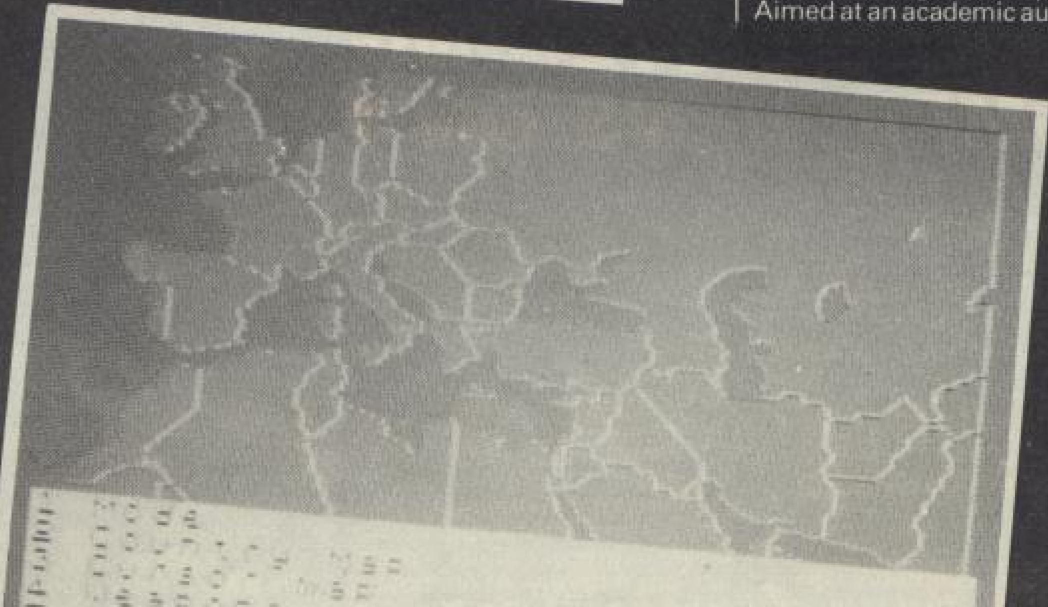
Paul Smoker, the author of *Worldwise* has used the simulations very successfully with groups of students at the Richardson Institute who are following Peace Studies courses, but, while appreciating that the program might appeal to undergraduates, I doubt if it will enjoy much success in schools.

Certainly the idea of classroom simulations as a way of focussing discussion on the problems of the nuclear age is a very worthwhile one, but I feel that the rather dull presentation of the program would not endear it to school pupils. More clearly-defined situations, which took the players step-by-step through the decision making processes involved would have made the game more accessible. Nor, as it stands, is the program likely to have immediate appeal to teachers, because of the vast amount of direction and help they would have to give to their pupils.

I'm sure though, that the program will be very successful with the undergraduate audience that it was devised for — perhaps too with other groups, like the Greenham Common protesters, although I don't think there is much call for home-computers in their tents!

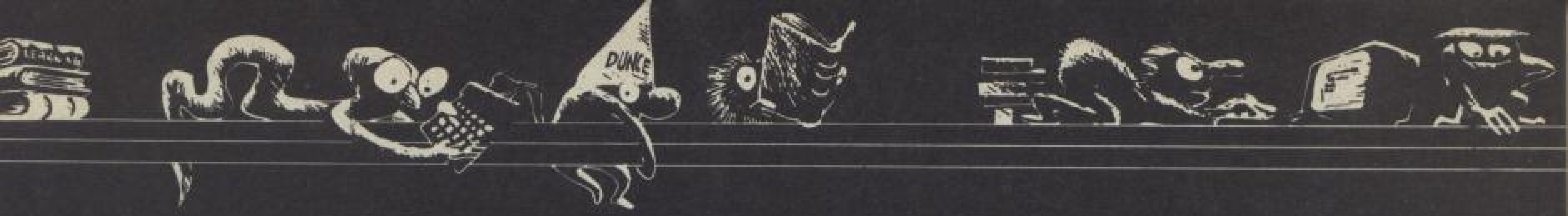






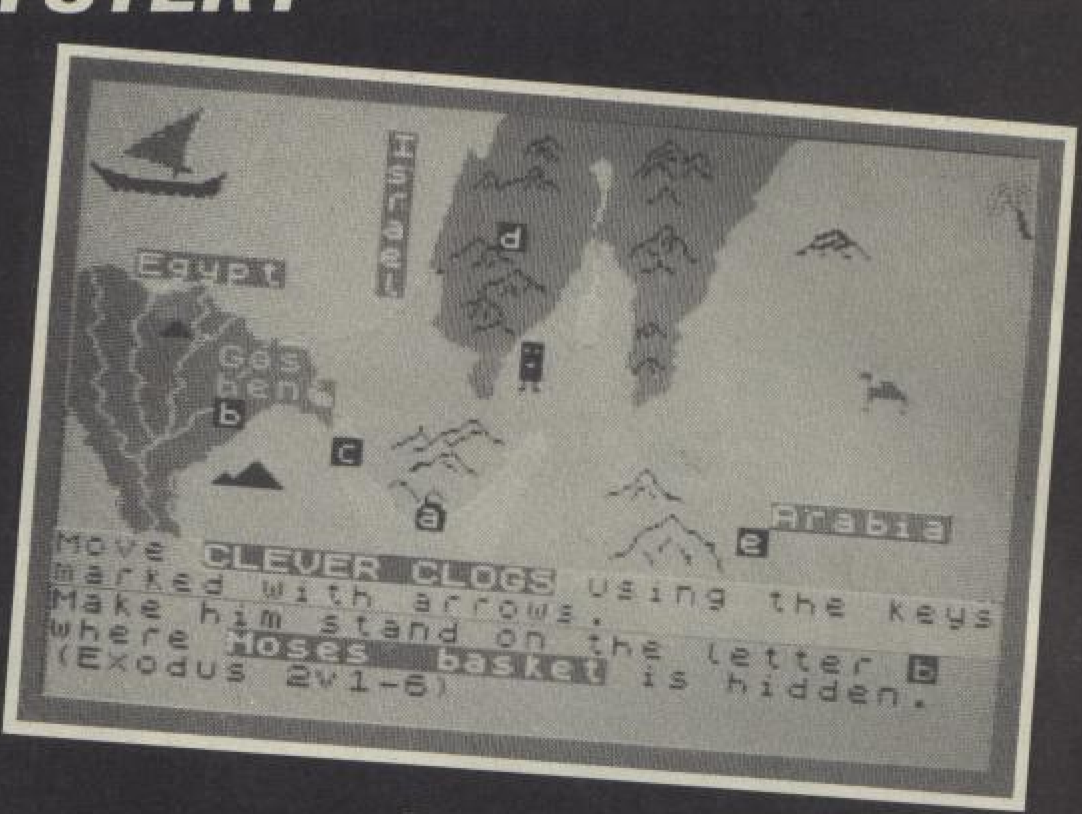
COMMENTS

Control keys: the variety of keys to be used in the different sections of the program is explained very clearly in the Users Manual
Keyboard play: very fast
Use of colour: good
Graphics: mainly maps, but clear representations
General rating: minority appeal. Aimed at an academic audience.



HISTORY MYSTERY

Producer: Argus Press Software (Clever Clogs Series)
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Age range: **5 to 11 and over**



The aim of the five games in this package is to teach children about the Bible in an entertaining way by giving them the task of finding various Biblical treasures, such as Moses' basket, the Ten Commandments and Herod's Crown. A clue (a Bible reference) is given for each treasure. The first game, *Easypeasia*, involves only seven of the treasures and is intended to familiarise the player with the controls. After this, the games become progressively more difficult, building up to the final challenge, *Plunderthunder*, where the player has to race the evil Dr Plunderwerst to the treasures avoiding a variety of dangers on the way.

The player is referred to the Today's English Version of the Bible, although a short summary of the Bible stories which occur in the game is supplied with the cassette.

A teacher of Religious Education, who looked at the program for me, had some reservations about its use. He felt that the maps were a useful way of reinforcing the geography of the areas involved, though the inclusion of a world map would have been helpful for the child to see the position of the biblical lands in relation to his won country. He also thought that the game encouraged children to interpret the Bible literally, instead of increasing the awareness that it contains not only history but also myth, legend and parable. Nor does it consider the fact that the real function of Bible study is to help people learn more about themselves and the modern world they live in. The Good News Bible would probably have been a more suitable source of reference that the Today's English version.



COMMENTS

Control keys: move by using the arrow keys; L to see list of treasures, C for clues, D to find out if you have landed on a treasure
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: mainly maps, but quite good
General rating: with a fair amount of adult direction, this program could be useful, though I doubt if it is the kind of game a child would choose for him or herself.

FRENCH LISTENING COMPREHENSION 1

Producer: Softlee Systems
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.50 (including connection lead)**
Age range: **Secondary school pupils to adult, with a basic knowledge of French**

This listening comprehension is one of the *See Hear* programs already described. The program contains three different sections, each with ten questions and of increasing levels of difficulty. The user will hear the instructions for use in French while the program is loading, although they are printed on the package in English too.

In the first section, short snippets of conversations can be heard, and the task is to answer questions on who is speaking, where the speaker is, and what he is doing. Each time, the screen shows a choice of four possible answers, and the user must position the red band over the answer of his or her choice. One might, for instance, hear the contents of a shopping list, and have to decide if the speaker is in a cafe, a grocer's shop, a chemists's or a bakery. At the bottom of the screen, a green strip diminishes in length to show the amount of time remaining.

Section Two contains short descriptions of various situations, followed by part of a conversation. This time, the user must select the correct reply from the options on the screen. One conversation is between a policeman and the witness to an accident, who is asked 'Was the lorry travelling too fast?' The final and most difficult section features a conversation and a story, each of which is heard twice. This time, the questions are also displayed a second time with the initial responses highlighted, so that the user can alter the answer given if he or she desires.

If the user scores 16 or more out of a possible 30, the correct answers can then be displayed, with accompanying explanations, for the questions incorrectly answered or the user may choose to see just the number of each question he or she answered incorrectly, together with the answer chosen.

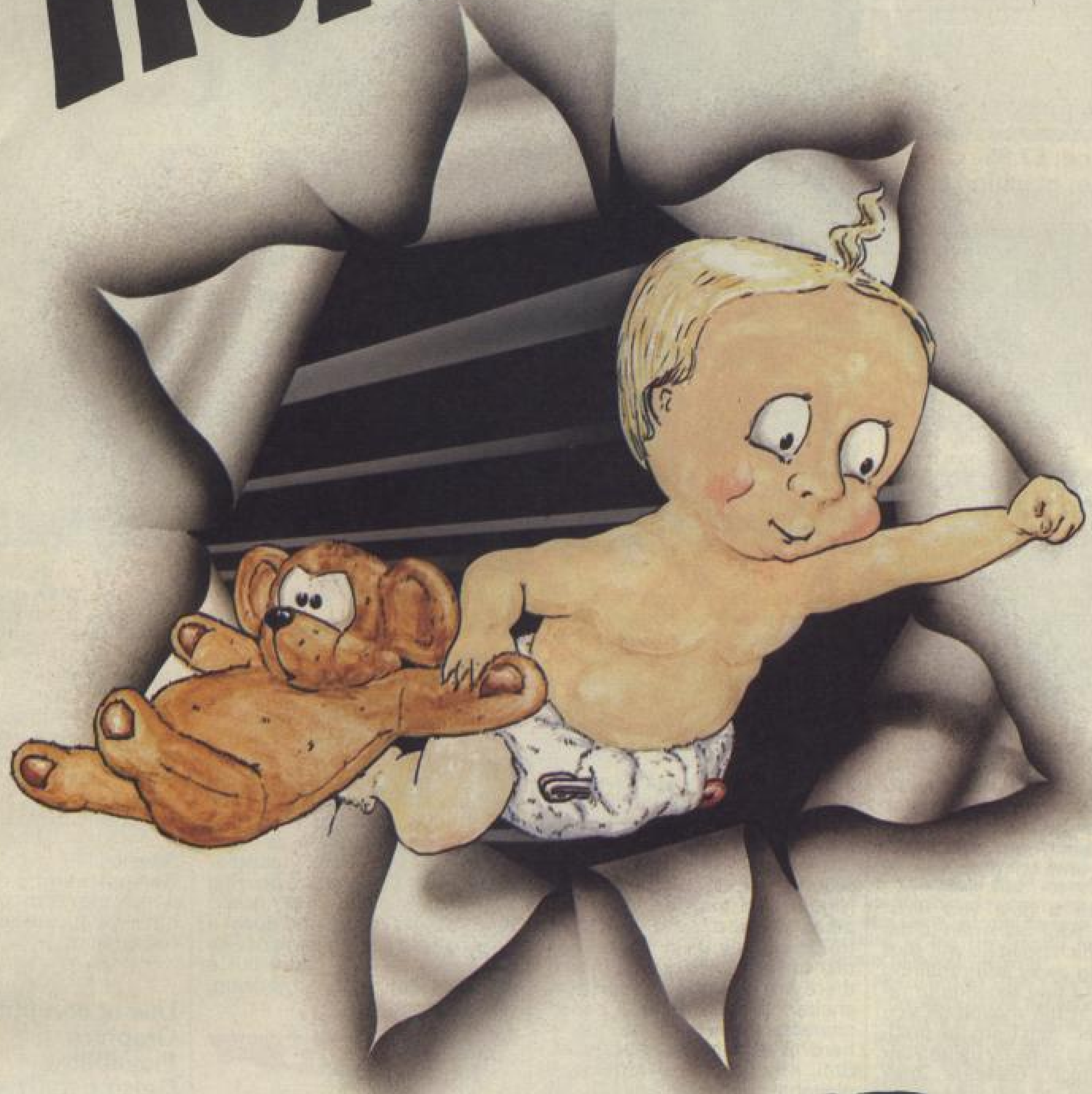
This program definitely scores over the other language programs on the market because of the listening element. All the audio material is read clearly and at a sensible pace by two native French speakers, and the sound quality is very good indeed.



COMMENTS

Control keys: any key to move red band downwards to chose an answer, number keys to move it up
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: none,
General rating: Highly recommended

Herbert's



Dummy Run

Trouble In Store for Herbert

Spectrum 48K £9.95
Commodore 64 £9.95
Amstrad CPC 464 £9.95

SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR · VOTED BY THE READERS OF COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES · Commended · GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS

MIKRO-GEN

44 The Broadway, Bracknell, Berks. 0344 427317

SUPER PIPELINE 2

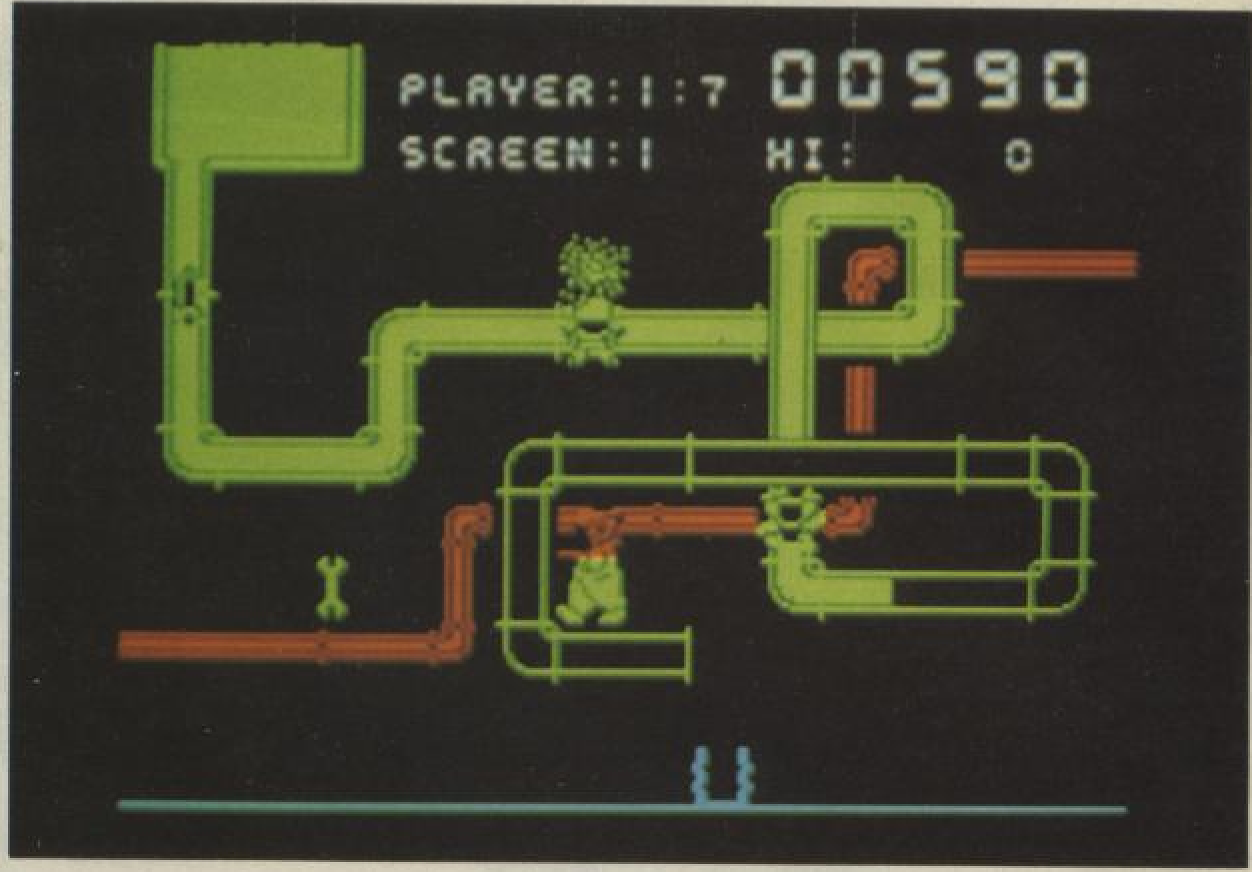
Producer: Taskset
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

Super Pipeline became something of a cult game on the 64 and gave software house Taskset a big following. The Spectrum version of *Super Pipeline 2* is the first ever game Taskset have done on the Spectrum, and is a conversion from the 64 version of the same name.

In *Super Pipeline 2* you are in charge of a gang of busy workmen who repair various long, convoluted pipes that get damaged by the nasties that come from all angles. Some of them are harmless to the pipes but not much good to yourself or your team, whereas others, like the two types of drill, make holes in the pipes. This is a Bad Thing because water is flowing down from a cistern at the top left, through the pipe, to issue at the end into a barrel. The object is to fill the barrel(s) before the supply in the cistern runs out. It takes a while for the water to run all the way through the pipe, so nothing is being wasted if holes are made before the water reaches them, but after that precious time and water is awasting.

To repair a hole you must guide one your workmen to the hole, at which point he will start hammering away and repairing it. It takes a few seconds to repair, and in the meantime you must protect him from the predators. This is done by using your blaster which, however, may only be fired left and right which puts you in a vulnerable position while you are climbing up or down a pipe. The workmen run on to the screen and dash around the pipe complex until they are either snatched by a nasty or come up against you, in which case they huddle at your back until led off to a repair job.

When a barrel is filled, a tune plays and various inter-screen animation sequences take place. Each subsequent pipe is longer and more complicated than the last, later ones require more than one barrel to be filled, and of course there are more and nastier nasties. Lobsters can only be shot up from behind and the tacks are completely invulnerable.



CRITICISM

● 'This may sound like a betrayal, but we ought to admit that there are some games where the graphics work so well on the 64 and less well on the Spectrum — the reverse is also true of course. *Super Pipeline 2* is such a game. I do play games on the Commodore, and this looks so much better on that machine. Anyway, having said that, I think Taskset have done a good conversion of this madly addictive piece of frenzy. I always enjoyed the way your workmen have a mindless mind of their own, and true to British style — there's never one around when you need one! Niggles are that the horizontal pipes are hard to get onto, control is slightly tricky (and it is a test of your joystick too), and if there are a couple of workmen sheltering behind you, their characters overlap, making it hard to see the damned pipe!. Still, it is an addictive game, a playable one although a bit tough because of the things I've just mentioned, one well worth getting.'

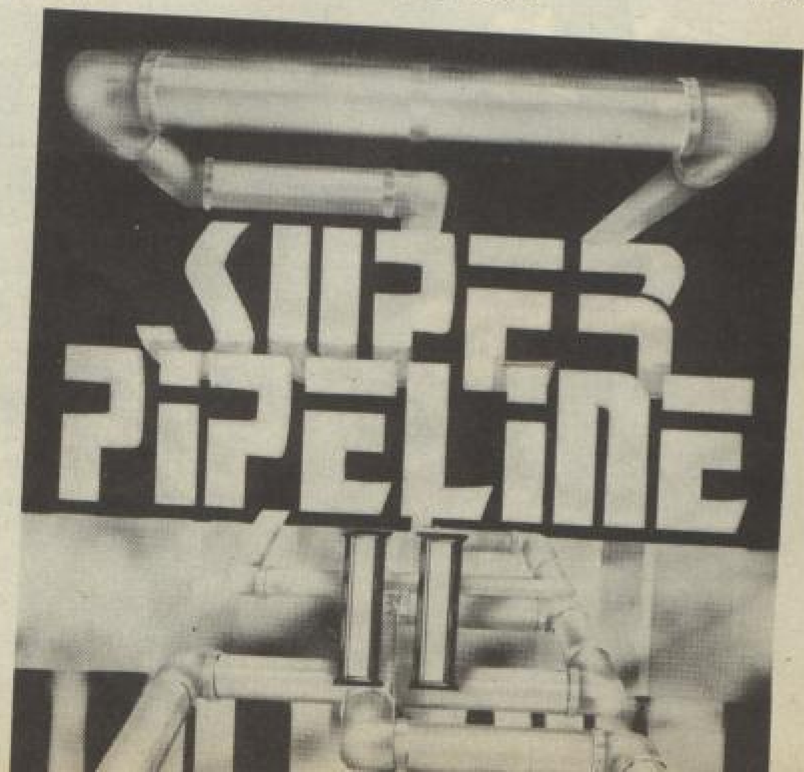
● *'This was one of my favourites on the CBM. The Spectrum version has not done too badly either, it has very good cartoon like graphics which are well drawn and animated. The sound is very good for the Spectrum but it leaves a little to be desired. Playing the game is as manic, or more so, than the CBM64 version and I am very addicted to it as it is so playable. It has little sequences at the end like 'Pacman' which are very jolly. My only niggle is that when you want to cross over to another part of of the pipeline you have to move your foreman exactly to the right position or else he won't move at all so if you aren't very good at playing or you have two workmen following you (so you can't see the pipe) you tend to lose lives as it takes time to get it right.*

● '*Super Pipeline 2* is a fast, addictive and very difficult game to play. Graphics are along the usual pipeline style but plenty of nice animation and colour. The meanies are extremely vicious and at first I thought the game was too difficult to play — I still do! I soon got very frustrated with because as soon as I had plugged one hole, another appeared. The water pouring out is realistic and nicely described. I found the up and down a little hard to get the hang of — a bit finicky. A nice game but a little too difficult for my liking. Frantic plugging!

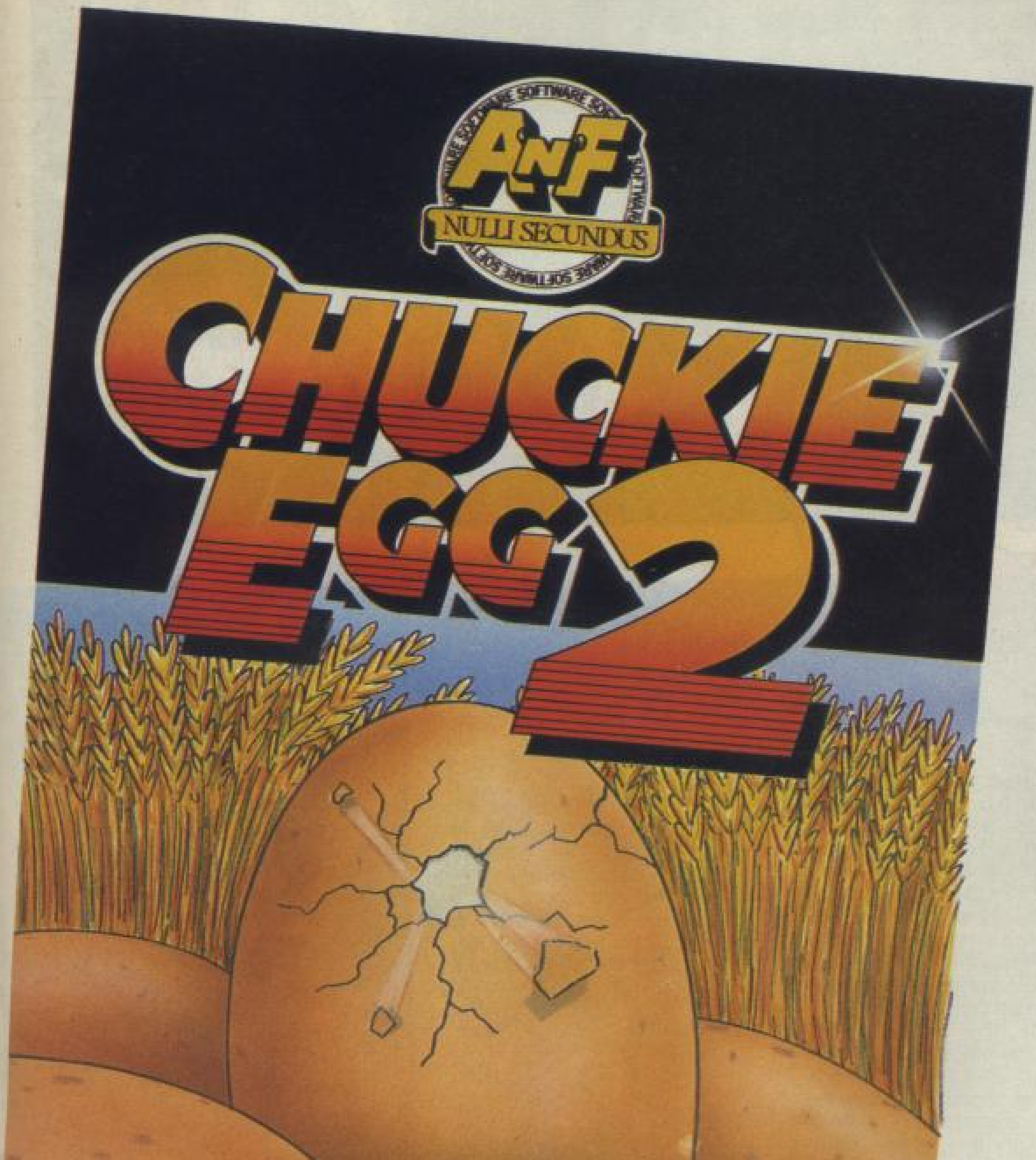
COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, E/D up/down, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Cursor
Keyboard play: very positive response, but finicky control
Use of colour: generally fine, each pipe in a different colour, but some graphics clashes
Graphics: nicely sized characters with good animation
Sound: good tunes between screens, otherwise spot effects
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: selectable between 1 and 8
Screens: 16
General rating: a conversion which suffers in comparison, but a tough and addictive game nonetheless.

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	80%
Playability	81%
Getting started	80%
Addictive qualities	86%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**79%**



A great NEW game from A&F.







Our intrepid hero"Hen House Harry" of **"Chuckie Egg"** fame has been called in to help a **"Chocolate Egg"** manufacturer sort out his automated factory, which has gone hay wire. Harry, using all the skills he acquired working in the Hen House must get the wheels of industry moving.

Not only does Harry have to collect the ingredients to mix the eggs, but he will also have to collect the parts for the toys that go inside the eggs.

As if all these problems were not enough there are a number of other items that Harry will need to find and use to be able to complete the task. Things like ladders, bits of girders, keys and many more.

Chuckie Egg 2 contains 120 screens, plenty of surprises, and it is a true Arcade/Adventure game - *you don't just find things, you actually move them and use them.*

SPECTRUM 48K

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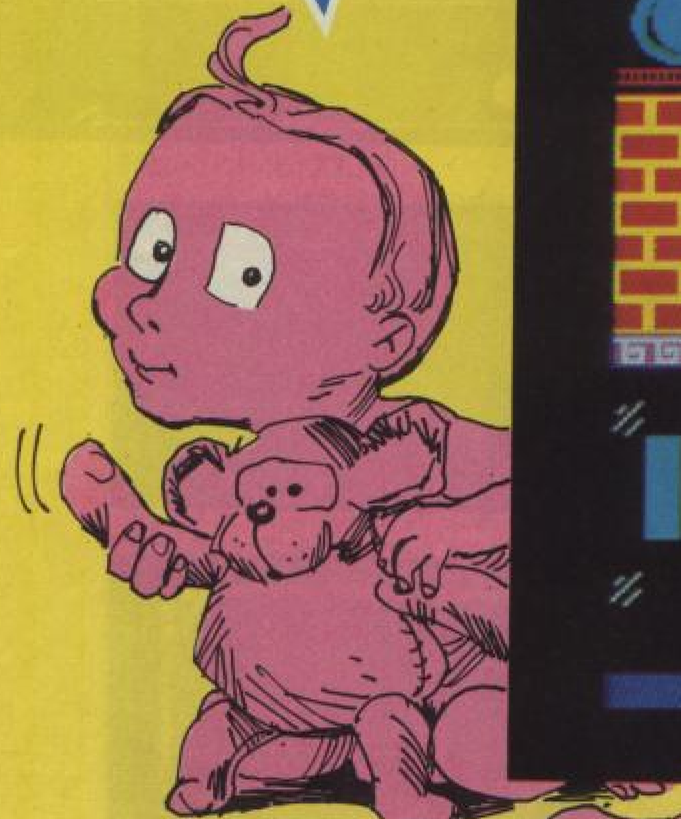
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HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN

Producer: Micro-Gen
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **The Micro-Gen team**

Now you should all remember Herbert. He's the little chap from the Week family whose ineptitude became world renowned in *Everyone's a Wally*. In this game Herbert has become separated from his Mum and Dad during a visit to the local department store. It is up to you, the player to guide him back to his parents who are waiting for him in the 'LOST AND FOUND' department.

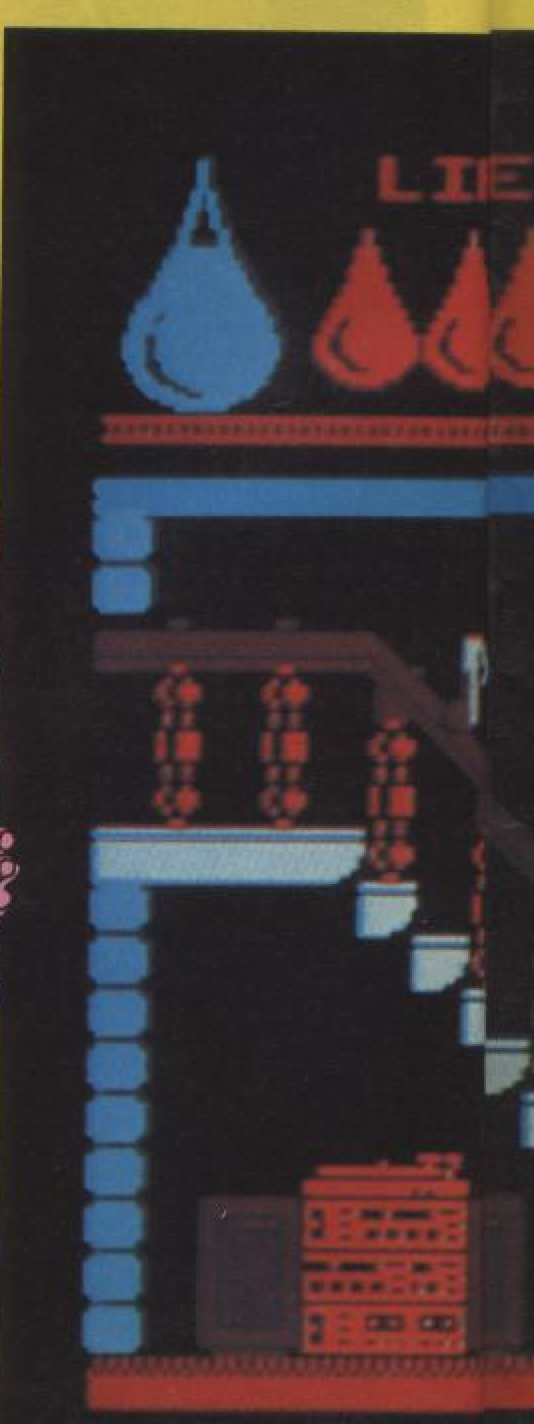
The game begins with Herbert in the toy department at 1 pm: the store closes at 5.30 and you have four and a half hours to reunite Herbert with his parentals, since the game is played in real time. In both style and presentation *Herberts Dummy Run* is similar to *Everyone's a Wally*, which is not surprising as it's the third game in the Wally trilogy! Dummy Run is a graphical adventure game that calls for a high degree of arcade skill as well as a degree of lateral thinking. The opening screen is typical of the game: Herbert finds himself standing on a box in the toy department; you notice at the top of the screen a series of shelves loaded with a wide variety of toys. How can Herbert reach up there? Well of course the box he's standing on is a Jack-in-the-box, and when the key has been fetched the spring action will propel him up onto the shelf.

As with the other Wally games, many of the screens take the form of well known arcade games. One screen can only be solved by dismantling a wall, 'Breakout' style — if you manage this the resultant pat on the head is well deserved.

The game would be too easy if you could pick up and carry every object that you came across. Only being able to carry two objects at a time forces you to do a little forward thinking. At the top of the screen you are reminded of what objects are in your possession — the one that you have had for the longest is automatically exchanged for another 'collectable' piece as you walk past it. As you explore the store looking for the ways and means to solve the game you are under constant pressure from a wide variety of mobile 'thingies'. You have three lives and when you come into contact with some of the nasties your energy, shown by a large tear that fills up, will be reduced until you escape the meanies, or lose that life. A few mobiles kill immediately on contact so you will have to learn to identify them quickly. You are able to reverse the drain on your energy by eating the sweets found scattered around the store.

For his efforts, Herbert is rewarded with his favourite jelly babies, and the closer he he is to finding his parents the more he will get. All told the game extends for over twenty five screens, but don't expect Herbert to get fat on jelly babies too soon!





D·U·M·M·Y R·U·N



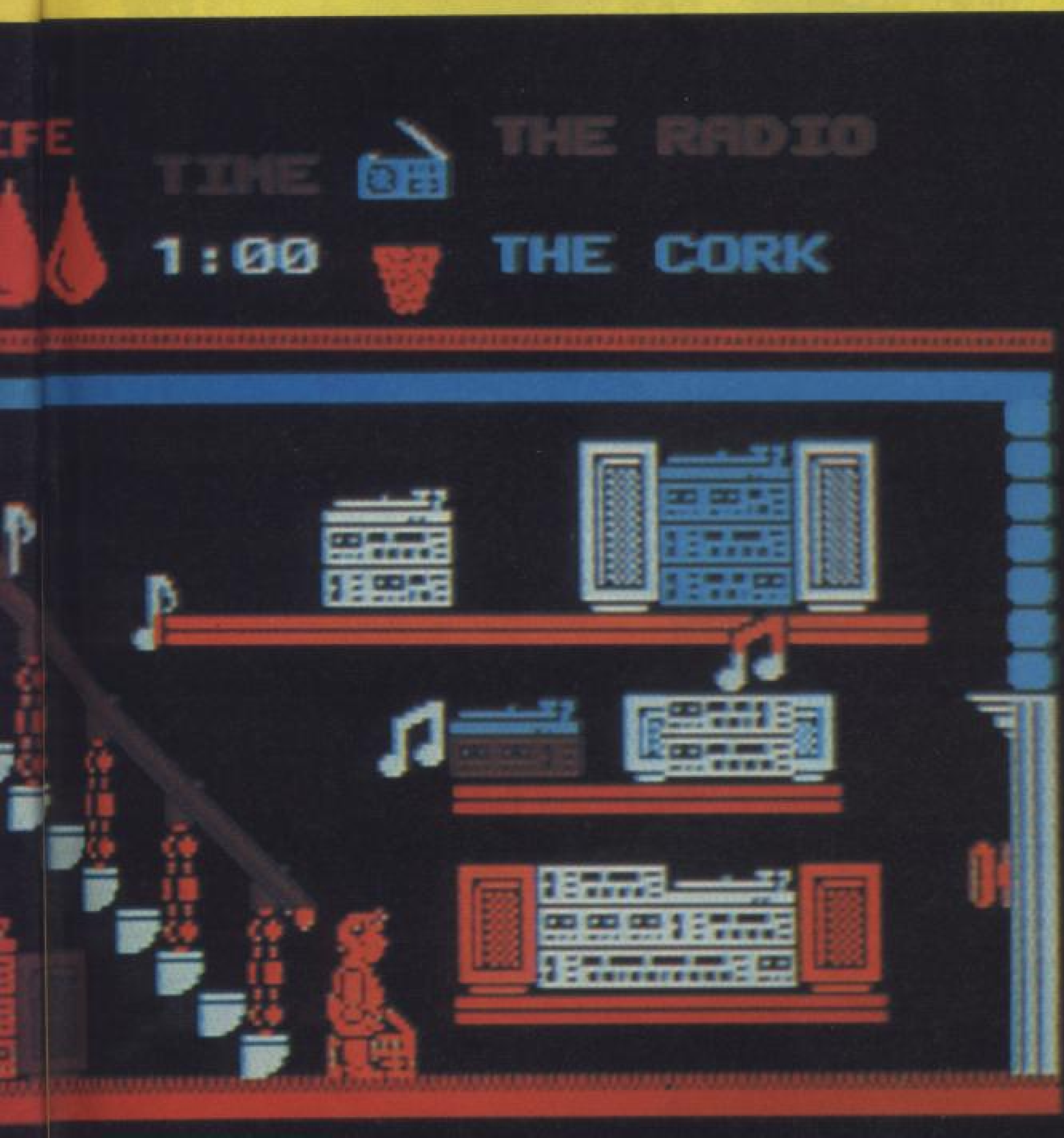
CRITICISM

● 'I have mixed feelings about this game, on the surface it is an excellent program but I feel that Micro-Gen may be repeating the formula once to often. If you don't mind that, then *Herbert's Dummy Run* may be worth having. The graphics are excellent, even better than those in *Everyone's a Wally*, the sound is reasonable and the colour is used well. The game is as infuriating as it's predecessor and should please the arcade/adventure addicts. Those horrible colour attribute problems are still with us but they really can't be helped, after a while you tend to ignore them. I think the asking price of £9.95 is a little steep — I feel the game would be much better value at £6.95. Overall it's a very good program if you don't mind more of the same. I hope Micro-Gen's next game is graphically as good but with a substantially different game format.'



● *'Herbert's Dummy Run contains graphics which are well up to Micro-Gen's high standard. They are both colourful, large and detailed. The game is fun and very addictive and contains many mini games within it's overall structure. While these mini games are nothing than fairly simple shoot-em-ups they add to the overall peril of the game. Herbert is destined to be another Micro-Gen star. At this rate I don't think the Wally trilogy is ever going to stop, with all those characters to choose from. I'm glad they've only got one character in this one — let's face it, when you've got five five characters all stealing the object you need next, infuriating isn't the word!'*

● 'Staying on the same lines as before — Herbert's life while he grows up in a wildly strange place — *Herbert's Dummy Run* is set in a large department store. Graphically it seems to be far better, perhaps it's the use of more colour, or even more detailed characters. One room that I liked particularly was the one with a huge bed and lots of 'Z's floating around. Plenty of arcade sequences are included in the game, which follows on from the general idea of the previous Wally games and requires some thought to enable you to progress with it. I only wish that Mikro-Gen had included some other characters that wander about, as in some of their other games, but sequels are based on on the fact that the production is better in some way than the last game. Overall I think that this game is another winner for Mikro-Gen.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q,E,T,U,O/W,R, Y,I,P left/right, Z-M to jump
Joystick: Sinclair and Kempston
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: excellent
Sound: good, nice opening tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: over 25
General rating: more of the same excellent stuff.

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	90%
Playability	89%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	90%
Value for money	82%
Overall	**90%**

Crash Competition

BANG WALLOP BIFF THUMP

Draw a Heavyweight Fighter and win a trophy!


Ravioli Mafiosi


Tribal Trouble






Canadian Crusher


Peter Perfect


Frenchie


Andra Puncheredov

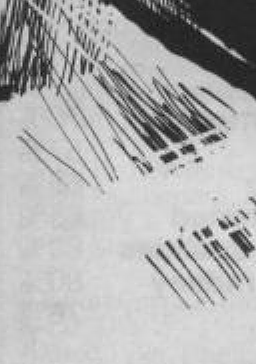

Antipodean Andy

elite



ELITE's latest offering for the Spectrum is FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING, in which you have to fight your way to the top in the heavyweight ring.

We've obtained a sneak preview of the portraits of the eight boxers who punch their way through the game. The nice Mr Wilcox at Elite is offering some knockout prizes to CRASH readers who come up with a drawing of a ninth boxer.



Fling Long Chop

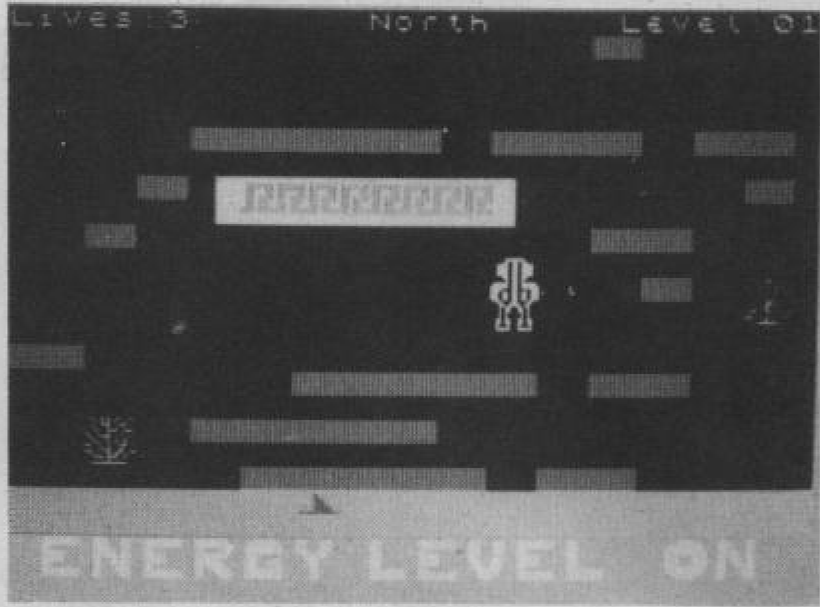


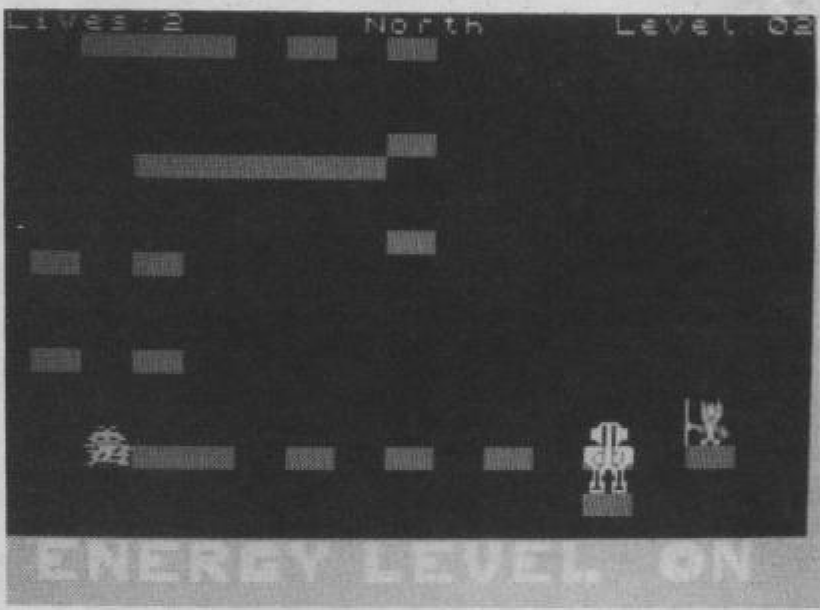
Take a gander at the eight lovelies pictured here and let your imagination run riot — the outright winner of the comp will pick up a specially commissioned trophy, a VTX5000 modem (reviewed in Tech Niche this issue) and a copy of the game. Two lucky runners-up will also pick up a VTX5000 modem - ideal for getting onto Micronet, together with a copy of the Frank Bruno game, and a further twenty two lucky entrants will receive their very own copy of Elite's aggressive arcade action masterpiece.

Entries please to reach the FRANK BRUNO COMPETITION, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB no later than 25th July let's have a nice clean drawing, and may the best artist win in this, the Elite Prize Fight.

MOUNT CHALLENGE

Producer: Aasvoguelle Productions
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Bill Percy**





I would like to think that this game was inspired by the Shropshire hills that surround its author's home but the deadly creatures and unpleasant plant life found in this game are thankfully not to be found on the Long Mynd, at least not in such numbers.

Mount Challenge is an unusual game. The player guides Professor Burk to the top of the mountain. For the sake of scientific research he must battle his way to the top while being under constant threat from the nasties that live on the mount. Even the little birdies tucked up in their nests are lethal. Burk must be guided from one ledge to another (in reality, platforms of varying length and colour). The length of a ledge can be described in terms of blocks or steps since this is how Burk moves, either one or two steps across or by one or three jumps up or down. So to play the game you consider the ledge that Burk is on and try to map out a route in advance. If Burk is on a green ledge then he cannot move at all until the energy is turned **on**, and then only one step at a time. If a ledge is red then movement is by one step at a time with the energy **off** or by two steps with it **on**. If you are one step from the edge of a red ledge with the energy on and you jump to the side then you are going to jump one step too far into who knows what.

On some ledges monsters await you, attacking as soon as you move onto their level, at which point escape at full speed is the only course and under that kind of pressure sorting out whether you should have the energy on or off is very difficult.

The game is played over 160 screens, the mountain being 20 screens high with the other screens taking up its various faces. Some faces have no ledges — so any attempt to jump onto them will be met with mild disappointment. Getting to the mountain's summit takes a great deal of time because the author has laid so many traps. More often than not you think you've found a way up to the next level only to discover yourself trapped because the colour of the ledge you land on prevents you jumping back.

While the game does not provide a score as such this can measured by noting how many levels you have managed to scale. Three lives are allowed and in the very likely event of your losing one you find yourself back on the screen on which you died but back at the place of entry. On the B side of the tape there is a pretty standard dominoes game — generous chap our Bill. The game is only available mail-order, and you can contact Bill on 069 46 345

CRITICISM

● 'When I first played *Mount Challenge* I though 'Oh no not another half hearted platform game' but I was wrong. The program is definitely more of a puzzle than a game but I am sure that's as intended. The graphics are OK for the type of program though a little on the boring side. I found the game extremely addictive and challenging. Most of the time was spent experimenting with different routes. It is a great game for the price and with the dominoes game on the B side it must have some appeal.'

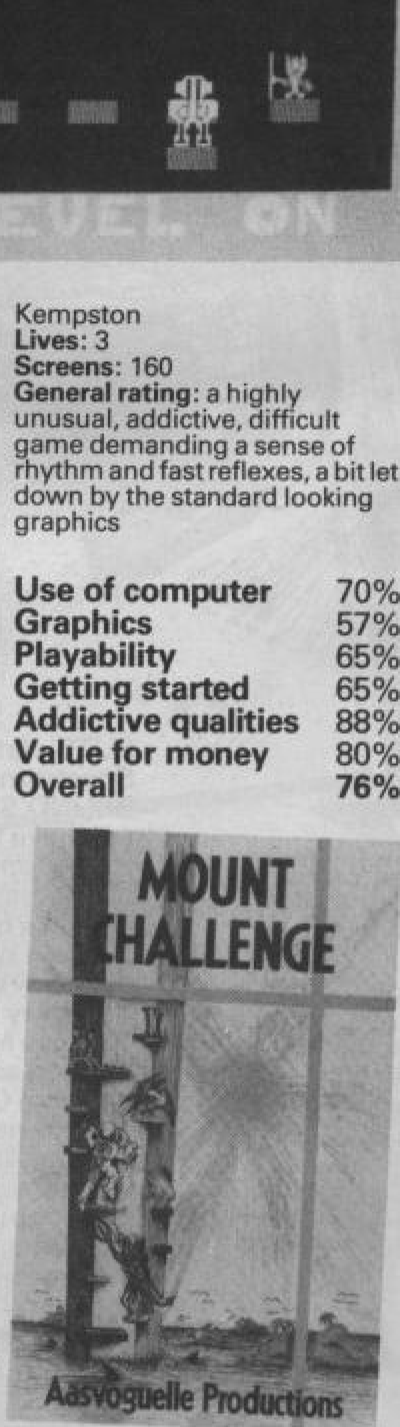
● 'Mount Challenge *really is an oddball game because the movement is dependent on the colour ledge on which you are standing. The game demands really quick decisions. At the edge of most screens one has to decide whether to jump one or two blocks but since you cannot see it's really a gamble — most of the time I was wrong and either ended up either stranded or shark bait. While Mount Challenge* has very simple graphics they are smooth and every now and then you encounter minor graphical niceties that implore you to explore further. The game design is superb because the idea behind it is so deviously simple, it is frustrating, challenging and addictive. Playability was marred until the controls had been mastered. In deference to Mr Minter I will describe the game as 'brill 'n fab' *so there.'*

● 'When I was first shown this game by Mr Percy I (in Minterese) 'got negative vibes man' and my first impression was a bad one. When I settled down to play it I was impressed by the puzzle that the game presented and I would dearly love to get to the top of that wretched mountain. I am only sorry that more effort was not made to produce much more attractive graphics, in themselves they would have made no difference to the playing of the game but I am not happy that the existing graphics do the game itself justice. One oddity I found in the inlay was the claim that the game had been made 'deliberately harder when using a Kempston . . . ' as the player could only change energy when the stick was centred . . . .Hmph! sounds rather like a bug being turned into feature. Perhaps Mr Percy will combine his obvious talents with those of a good designer for his next game.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, I/P left/right, W for energy on/off
Joystick: Kempston but the game is harder to play
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: generally very simple
Graphics: smooth and simple, Burk is rather ungainly
Sound: nice tune
Skill levels: 2 if you consider the Kempston
Lives: 3
Screens: 160
General rating: a highly unusual, addictive, difficult game demanding a sense of rhythm and fast reflexes, a bit let down by the standard looking graphics

Use of computer	70%
Graphics	57%
Playability	65%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**76%**



WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

OK Chaps and chapesses, here we go with another Results Roundup, brought to you by your loyal Competition Editor, whose only aim in life is to get hold of luvverly prizes and let you win them.

No contributions have been forthcoming for the jumper fund and despite the so-called start of summer this 'umble minion has been slaving away, working his fingers to the bone with hardly any time left to shiver.

I've done my very very best this month, to keep you up to date with who has won what, but with Lloyd's incessant demands to make him tea, service his typewriter and kick Candy, combined with Jeremy 'El Corpulento' Spencer's insistence that I wash his Morgan every Monday, I've not got as far forward as I might have.

Winners of Bubble Bus**'s High Score challenge, the** Vulcan Designer Joystick comp **and** Incentive's Confuzion Sweat Shirt puzzle will have to bear with me 'till next ish. The Micromega **Slime Challenge Winners will know who they are by now — Micromega are writing to them direct to make sure that the secret play-off remains a secret, so it's schtumm from me on that one. Meanwhile, here's the rest of the results to date. . . .**

WINNER OF WALLY FAN CLUB COMP

David Ball, Alice Street, NE33 5PH

HONOURABLE MENTION

Daniel Watkins, Meadow Rise, DY12 1JS
T Lennon, Kingstanding Road, Birmingham

Spot Prize Winners
Alan McNamara, York Avenue, OL8 4BY
Billy Sloan, Maybole Rd, KA19 7PQ
Robert Corradi, Brookmans Ave, AL9 7QG
David Tyler, Henley Crescent, B91 2JH
Stephen Graham, Green Lane, Cumbria
I McAuliffe, West Common Grove, AL5 2LL

RUNNERS UP

Darren Brooker, Greenfield Rd, M29 9LW, Neil Commins, Thurlestone Drive, SK7 5RD, Graham Baker, Meadow View, NR34 8HF, J Singh, Manor Road, Hadley, Scott Green, Woodlands Grove, PO7 5HS, Nick Lovibond, Pool Lane, WA13 9BJ, Robin Bilney, Cranmer Road, NG24 4ET, Ian Powick, The Nurseries, LL13 0DP, Steven Wadsworth, Waterloo Road, Norfolk, Alan Johnston, Lincoln Avenue, G13 3PZ, Andrew Taylor, Woodland Drive, S81 7JV, Clint Walker, St Margaret Gardens, LN6 8BG, Christopher Wilding, Edgewood Drive, LU2 8ER, Steven Rogers, Levister Street, BL4 9HS, Stephen Nolan, Halmemarin Road, L4 3SA, Carl Simpson, Berryfields Road, B76 8US, John Nash, Elmdale Grove, SO5 0AX, Jonathan Brough, Churston Rise, Devon, Peter Climie, Lincoln Avenue, G13 3PY, Paul Marcroft, Kennedy Road, S8 0HD, C M Llewellyn Smith, Wellington Place, OX1 2LD, Colin Reekie, Schoolhouse, KY10 2DH, Garry McCormack, Sinclair Street, G81 1AE, Neil Smith, Sandyforth Avenue, FY5 4BS, Stuart Wardale, Field Lane, L10 0AG, Stuart Chadwick, Jerome Close, BN23 7QY, Claire Ritchie, Arthur View Crescent, EH22 1NQ, Dave Bailey, Wake Green Road, B13 9PZ, Leo Deric, Sunnyside Parc, Cornwall, Brian McCrum, Tulleyhinan Road, Northern Ireland, John Gamble, Thornleight Drive, BT28 2DS, Christopher Allen, Broadlands Avenue, S19 6RL.

WINNERS OF THE AUTOMATA COMPETITION. . . .

Deus Ex Machina, Greatest Hits Vol One and Two
J Gregory, The Lawley, B63 1JB Paul Smith, Rosebank, EX35 6AR Jason Goddard, Dordon Close, B90 1AH Philip Miggiton, Ironside Road, S14 James Parsons, Heron Way, RH13 6DP

Five winners of DEUS
Jonathan Blake, Janus, OX5 2SH John Atkinson, Browfield, CA11 0QA J Harvey, Sawley Road, DE7 3EF Andrew Todd, Croft Close, YO4 3JU Paul Wadsworth, Lewis Court, DA11 7EA

Ten winners of TENPACKS
K Bostock, Highfield Drive, CH7 7AL Mrs J V Pitchell, Midships, BN24 6AL M Craig, C/o Mawdsley, EH6 7NL Graham Fulcher, Lowenva, IP25 7AX Ian Clark, Argyle Street, PE21N 8PH Mark Drackford, Cressing Road, CM7 6PN S G Mitchell, Munnings Close, RG21 3EH J Tomkinson, Sundial Lane, B43 6PA Chris Robinson, Tuart Street, DH3 3EN Steve Livings, Haslemere Road,CR4 7BF

winners of GO TO JAIL Malcolm Collinge, Lostock Avenue, SK12 1DR E Hart, Polmuir Road, SR31QF Mrs A Cutting, Cambridge Road, ME8 0JH A Measures, Foxborough Road, OX14 3AE Derek Cooper, Granville Road, LA1 2PA Michael Bowditch, Goldcroft, BA21 4DA Damon Querry, Mount Road, SR4 7QD Clive Pilcher, Paddock Mead, CM18 7RR Alistair May, Institution Road, IV30 1QT John Taylor, Melbourne Cottages, NR2 2SV

WINNERS OF THE IMAGINE BASEBALL COMPETITION

N Atkinson, Margaret Court, WA8 7XZ Ron Atkinson, Bayford Road, ME10 3AD Anthony Allen, Bibshall Crescent, LU6 3NF Jonathan Anstee, Jalna Heddington, SN11 0PS Peter Barnbury, Ripley Grove, PO3 6NJ C R Benle, Ashcroft Road, L37 6BL Nick Binns, Walmley Road, B76 8PG Mr K Bly, Alpine Rise, CV3 6NR Kevin Borg, Buckingham Close, W5 1TS Hilary Brown, Venner



Ave, PO31 8AF Paul Buckland, Haig Street, NE11 9BN James Clarke, Grace Way, Herts Simon Crabb, Conway Drive, PO21 4XD S Ementon, Park Gardens, BA20 1DW Martin Fisher, Leisure Court, Tyne and Wear Edward Freeman, Archway Court, CB3 9LW Gerard Frith, Mayfair Ave, RM6 6UB Adrian Gale, Warston Avenue, B32 3ST M Gate, Panorama Road, BH19 2QT Paul de Garis, Taddyforde House, EX4 4AT Stephen Graham, Green Lane, CA2 7QB Soren Gjesse, lukkensprove 2, Denmark Jonathan Hart, DE2 5AH Nick Haynes, Pine View Close, GU27 1DU Steven Holmes, Max Road, Derby Jonathan Hunter, Cumberland Avenue, DN32 0HT Culann McLaughlin, Centenary Park, BT78 5HL James McMullen, Woodview, Ireland Alex Marsh, Ian Road, CM12 0JX S Mitchell, Munnings Close, RG21 3EH M Oswald, Adelaide Street, PE9 2EN Andrew Patterson, Willow Close, CV12 8BE Neil Pearson, Robins Dale, GU21 2LQ David Reid, Midholm Road, Surrey W P Riggs, Herns Lane, AL7 2AH Craig Sanders, Briarley Gardens, SK6 1PJ Martin Scanlan, Albeca, TR3 7JT Simon Scott, Silver Springs, BH20 6BU Nathan Spencer, Ledbury Road, LE11 2RD Alan Stevens, Badger Road, S13 7TX Alan Thomas, Woodgate Road, GL16 7QQ Drew Turpin, The Rye, LU6 2BQ Marlo Valente, Darenth Drive, LE4 0PJ Rajesh Varia, Moira Street, LE4 6LD Sarah Walmsley, Wilton Close, NN14 2QJ Jeremy Ward, Liskeard Gardens, SE3 0PN C Warren, Great Innings SG14 3TQ Michael White, Abernethy, DH2 1RX T I Wisbey, Timber Orchard, Herts Alan Wooton, Castle Road, ST7 3PH

ERIK THE VIKING COMP WINNERS

Three winners of Game and Book:
Peter Miller, Cedar Close, Hampshire Stephen Oliver, St Davids Drive, EN10 7LS Graham Pugh, Ascot Close, Cardiff

And the Seventeen runners up, who win a copy of the game are:

Keith Alabaster, Broadoak Avenue, ME15 6DH C R Beale, Ashcroft Road, L37 6BL R Hofman, Arubastraat 29 9715 RT, Netherlands Dagan Jones, Rokesly Avenue, N8 8NR Scott Jones, Green How Park, LS29 7LZ Tony Marshall, Douglas Square, TO9 0QU A Masters, Church Hill, South Yorkshire Andrew Moukwick, Riversdene, TS9 5DD Simon Proudman, West Town Lane, BS4 5DX Mark Roake, Whopshott Farm House, GU21 4SQ Tony Russell, Blandwalk, L6 9HD Michael Slater, Wood Top, BL0 9EN S J Smith, The Mill House, CT14 0LH Tony Smith, Salisbury Road, EX8 1SN Jonathan Stweart, Clos Des Ilses, Channel Islands J Thompson, Edgerton Drive, LS24 9QL Peter Waine, The Haven, Shropshire



The charming little Brass Doohickey, supplied by Ultimate as the prize in the Alien 8 Map drawing competition. 'Hug me, squeeze me, save from dat ole looney. . . .'

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

STARION COMP RESULTS

Congratulations Crashlings — the Universe has been saved as a result of your efforts in the Starion Competition! Here's the output from the Select and Sort Algorithm applied to your Postal communications. . . .

Anon, Queens Terrace, NE2 2PJ Another Anon, Witheridge Bungalow, Bucks Stephen Alexander, Williams Farm, CM9 8LR Michael Allison, Romanhurst, BR2 0PA J W Barnett, Csborne Street, SR6 9RE Andrew Barron, Rippon Crescent, S6 4RG Baumann, Seamons Close, Bedfordshire Richard Baverstock, Bennett Road, Midlands Matthew Beard, Apple Grove, EN1 3DA R Bilney, Cranmer Road, NC24 4ET L J Bradley, Wynter Close, Avon Martin Brealey, Rufford Avenue, NG4 4FS Mr S Bright, Lady Margaret's Avenue, Peterborough Stephen Burt, Sandy Lane, WV6 9EB Warren Caine, Queensway Drive, WV16 4JF John Carpenter, Ashdale Close, PE17 5SN Paul Carruthers, Eagle Crescent, G61 4HP Susan Carter, Maxwell Road, DA16 2ER Nigel Challis, Swindon Road, Wilts Stewart Cook, Constable Avenue, Hull 4HW Matthew Cooks, Old School House, Somerset Alan Cowan, Ferneze Avenue, G76 7RU Paul Crockford, Ferry View, ME11 5LP Martin Davis, Langstone Way, SN5 7BU K Dowson, Woodcrest, SY3 5EX Ben Devereau, Worley Road, AL3 5NS Beverley Eaton, Windsor Road, WV7 3PN Mark Ellis, Retreat Heights, Ireland Michael Fawkner, Pandora Road, CV2 2FU K O Fenton, Ripon Drive, NG34 8UF Graham Field, Haymeads Lane, CM23 5JJ Raymond Francis, Montpelier Gardens, RM6 4EJ Steven George, Halton Moor Avenue, LS9 0EZ Chris Giles, Walnut Tree Road, TW17 0SD Jonathan Green, Ben Madigan Park South, BT36 7PX Mark Greenhill, Steventon New Road, Ludlow Paul Gregg, George Street, Notts Kevin Grubb, Viewforth Street, KY1 3DH K Grzesik, Chesterfield Road, S18 0RS David Haire, Netherstone Lane, WS13 8BG Simon Harrison, Ascot Close, CV12 8TB Jason Hayward, Churchill Grove, WF16 0BW Kristian Head, Abreys, The Common, SS7 3LU M Heasman, Beaulieu Road, BH4 8HY Miss J Hirst, Longfields Crescent, S Yorks A Hollingsworth, Wellfield Road, SK2 6AT Peter Hooper, Alfriston Place, OX16 7XT P Hopkins, Norham Close, NE13 7HS Simon House, Muswell Avenue, N10 David Houston, Southfield Avenue, PA 8BY Robert Hughes, Warwick Avenue, CV5 6DJ Euan Hunter, Cumberland Avenue, DN32 0BT C S Jacobs, Belhaven Hill, EH42 1IN A W Kenny, Lime Tree Avenue, CW1 4HZ M Abid Ali Khan, Underhill Road, SR6 7RS Ian King, Foxyard Road, West Midlands Francis Lee, West Drive, B20 3ST Graham Lewis, College Road, Kent Ross Lillywhite, Knox Road, PO2 8JL Matthew Lyon, Honeysuckle Close, RG22 5RH Barry McKeown, Anderson Street, ML3 0QN Neil Mockett, Clevedale, BS16 2SQ C Moore, Hollybank Close, S12 2GN Sam Morgan, Gilston Road, CF1 9JS Hiro Nakanishi, Minafon Road, CF4 6SY Mark Nicklin, Drump Road, TR15 1NA Toby Nightingale, Kelso Place, W8 G Norris, Nerissa Close, PO7 8LP Justin O'Brien, Cavendish Place, Sussex A Oliver, Buxton Road, SK11 7EU Eamonn O'Neill, Newcastle Road, BT31 9DP Master Simon Osborne, Hillside Gardens, RH3 7EW J Parmenter, Laburnum Close, NR31 8JB Rajesh Patel, Parkdale Close, B24 8JU Jamie Phillips, Potterne Wick, SN10 5QN A G Prat, Holberry Gardens, S10 2FR Daniel Raferty, Bodelwyddan Ave, LL29 9NP Darren Rea, Sitwell Arms, 4HQ Simon Read, Offchurch Lane, CV3 1TN Iain Rider, Poplar Close, Notts Tom Rix, Abinger Way, NR4 6NA Mark Rowley, Sunnyside Road, WN4 0LB Gavin Ryle, Mansionhouse Road, EH9 2JD Michael Ruddy, St Brides Drive, KA23 9BH Robert Savage, Crowland Road, CB9 9LF Michael Slater, Wood Top, BL0 9EN J M Sorensen, The Ridgeway, NE3 4LN Mark Stevenson, Honey Bourne, CM23 4EF Andrew Stocker, Farm Close, PR9 7QB N Tulett, Hollywood Lane, ME3 8AR Andy Turner, Falstaff Ave, RG6 2TQ Adam Vaughan, Whitlebury Court, NN12 8XQ Sarah Walmsley, Wilton Close, NN14 2QJ Howard Walters, Cross Lane, NN14 3EG Andrew Walton, Upper Astrop Road, OX17 3PT Paul Watts, Penfield Road, DY8 4LB Paul White, Rowlands Ave, PO7 7RU M Westthorp, Ashby Crescent, DH8 0LF T Williams, Brittain Drive, NE31 9JZ Stephen Winkley, Kenilworth Close, BB12 8SG

VOTING FOR THE ADVENTURE CHART

The CRASH Adventure Chart has picked up considerably since we first introduced it, with more and more votes coming in every day! To make life easier for sorting, we are now providing a separate write-in form, so please use it for the Adventure Chart, and not the one included at the bottom of the Hotline details. If you are voting on both charts, you may send both forms together in the same envelope of course.

How to register your votes

There seems to have been some confusion in the minds of voters for the Adventure Chart, so to clarify the situations, here's how we do it. You may vote for **as many titles as you wish** (not just five as in the Hotline Chart) and you may award any of them points out of ten. So, for instance, you might vote for seven titles giving each of them ten points if you think they are worth it, or only three and give them one each. These votes are then added up for each title and the total is divided by the number of people who voted for the program resulting in an aggregate figure. From these figures, the top thirty adventure games are taken in descending order.

Phoned-in votes are accepted over the Hotline **(0584 3015)** in the same way (please state that you are voting for the Adventure Chart at the beginning), and may also be written in letter form without the use of the coupon if you prefer.

Adventure Chart Prize Draw

And don't forget that, like the Hotline Chart, you can win prizes! Each month we draw a winner from the voters, who receives £40 worth of software and a CRASH T-shirt, with four runners-up each getting a T-shirt and a mini-subscription to CRASH for three months.

ADVENTURE CHART COUPON

Remember – points out of ten for as many titles as you wish.

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Crash Competition

DOING A RUNNER?

The chaps at **Design Design** (the fellows who brought you, amongst other things, **Dark Star** and associated lunacy) are about to release another game onto the world.

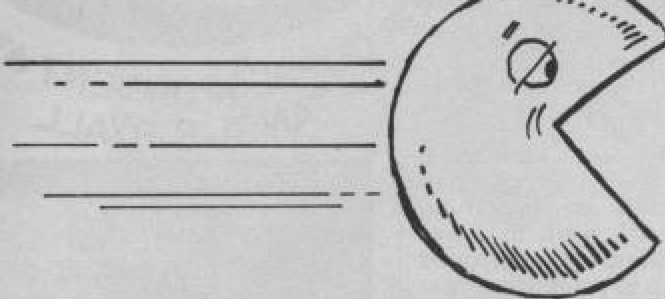
Called **On The Run**, the game is played in a beautiful maze, containing weird and wonderful plant life and there's a whole gamut of monsters to run . . . you will have the choice of a variety of weapons with which to defend yourself, and the object is to collect a number of potions in order to save life and the universe from the endless onslaught of greeblies.

It just so happens that Graham and Stuart spent the latter part of an afternoon in the office and were still around when the pubs opened — never ones to miss an opportunity, we wheeled them down to a local hostelry, plied them with pints of the killer *'Old Flatulence'* bitter and told them they were going to have to stump up a prize.

This they duly did — in the form of a table-top **Pac Man** machine, which will grace a lucky CRASH reader's bedroom or whatever in due course. Forty nine other lucky winneroonies will have their very own personal copy of **On The Run**.

Of course there's no chance your loyal Competition Editor will be allowed to claim any expenses for all the beer he bought to stitch up the deal, but such is the ingratitude of life. . . .

A chance to win a Pac Man arcade machine



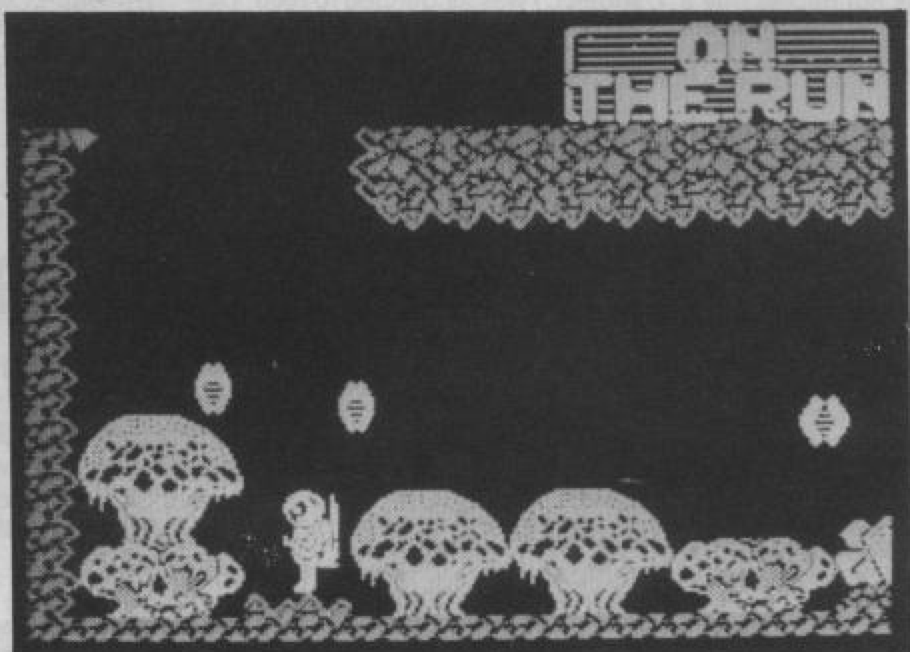
R N D E S I G

This is what you've got to do: take the letters that make up the words **Design Design**, **Dark Star** and **On The Run**, jiggle them around and make as many other words out of them as you can. Each word must be at least three letters long, and your entry should list the words in alphabetical order (we've got to check them against the CRASH dictionary, you see).

No foreign words allowed, and put your entry in its very own envelope, writing the number of words you've assembled from the letters **DESIGNDESIGNONTHERUNDARKSTAR** on the back. All entries should arrive at **ON THE RUN COMP, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** by 25th July.

longest list of words verified with the office dictionary wins the table top Pac Man machine and a copy of **Design Design**'s latest offering, and forty nine runners up (no less) will collect their copy of **On The Run** but no Pac Man machine!

Get jumbling



U R E H T N N

FRONT

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT AT THE FRONT
ANGUS RYALL

I am intrigued by a recent development in computer games — that of promoting the designer, or design team, behind a game rather than the software company. It seemed that almost half of last month's mag was devoted to Denton Designs, one team currently very much in favour. The Dentons are probably the prime example of the new breed of star programmers, but they're not the only ones.

One of the games that I've reviewed this month has been published by one company, while everything to do with the game has been created by another. In this case, what was formerly a relatively successful software publishing company has now become just a design house. This trend is going on all around — the companies with the marketing muscle become publishers for a number of design houses, themselves often created from the remains of smaller software publishers.

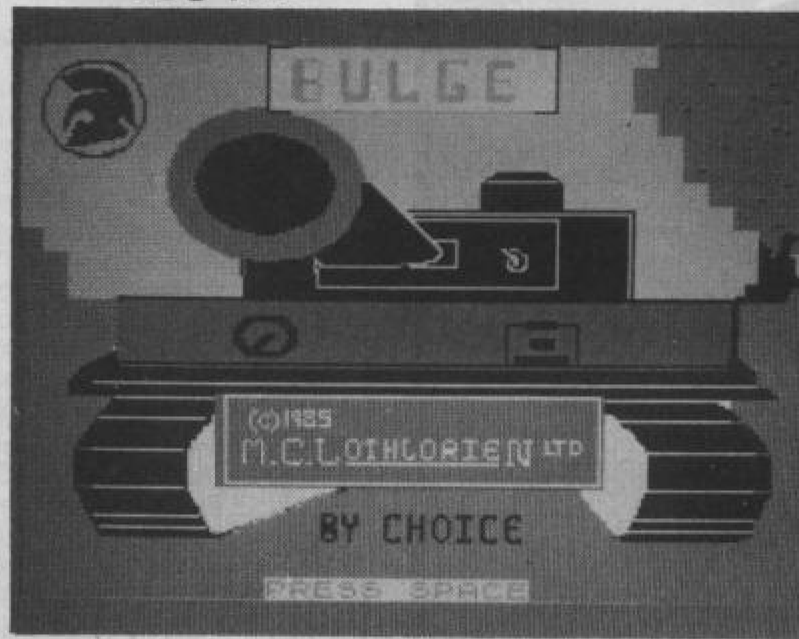
Now, this is not necessarily a bad thing; it could mean that the quality of product reaching the consumer improves. But the problem with 'star' programmers and teams could be that they will only add to the corporate inertia that the new heavyweight software publishers are already acquiring. The fact that a programmer has created one bestselling game does not mean he is a good enough programmer to do it again; the only way he may be able to do it again is to regurgitate the same formula — hence anything that comes remotely close to being a hit these days immediately spawns a sequel.

While it may be handy for the writers of press releases to be able to say 'the new megagame from the authors of XYZ and XYZ II', it may not be good for the industry as a whole, because every 'safe' sequel, or new game by the star team, may be blocking the way for new, original, material from fresh sources. If design teams are really going to create benefits by becoming stars, they will have to move away from doing commissioned work, and try to establish firmer identities on their own account — not as puppets of the major labels. Ironically, probably the only way they could do this at the moment is by setting up their own companies!

A good example of what I'm talking about is **Jeff Minter**'s company, **Llamasoft**. Jeff is a 'star' programmer who has developed a unique and instantly recognisable style -- and because he doesn't work to commission is regularly producing original (and bizarre) software. Any major label taking him on would have to give him a totally free hand — much as record companies do with their stars. Perhaps the software market is not yet developed enough, but as the polarisation we are seeing at the moment continues, and the heavyweights mop up the marketplace, design houses will find that the onus of originality rests with them — and they will have to discipline themselves to demand the right to be creative.

And on a completely different subject, I was astounded to read that Sinclair will not be producing a 128K Spectrum in time for Christmas. It seemed like an eminently sensible idea to me, probably Clive's best since, well, the 48K Spectrum. If it's true that they have millions of pounds worth of speccies they can't shift stashed away somewhere, they should either **1)** take them all down to Highway 61, or **2)** convert them to 128K at fairly marginal extra cost.

For watchers of Angus and Nicola's house (new series coming soon folks) we have (alas) done very little lately except acquire some plants and a compact disc, which, while doing wonders to the Mozart, has singly failed to bring the toilet any closer. Also, I now have a new motorbike, which is red with yellow spots on, to replace the one which some thieving hyena (probably one of my fans) nicked a couple of weeks ago. VROOOM!



A CRASH Smash

THE BULGE

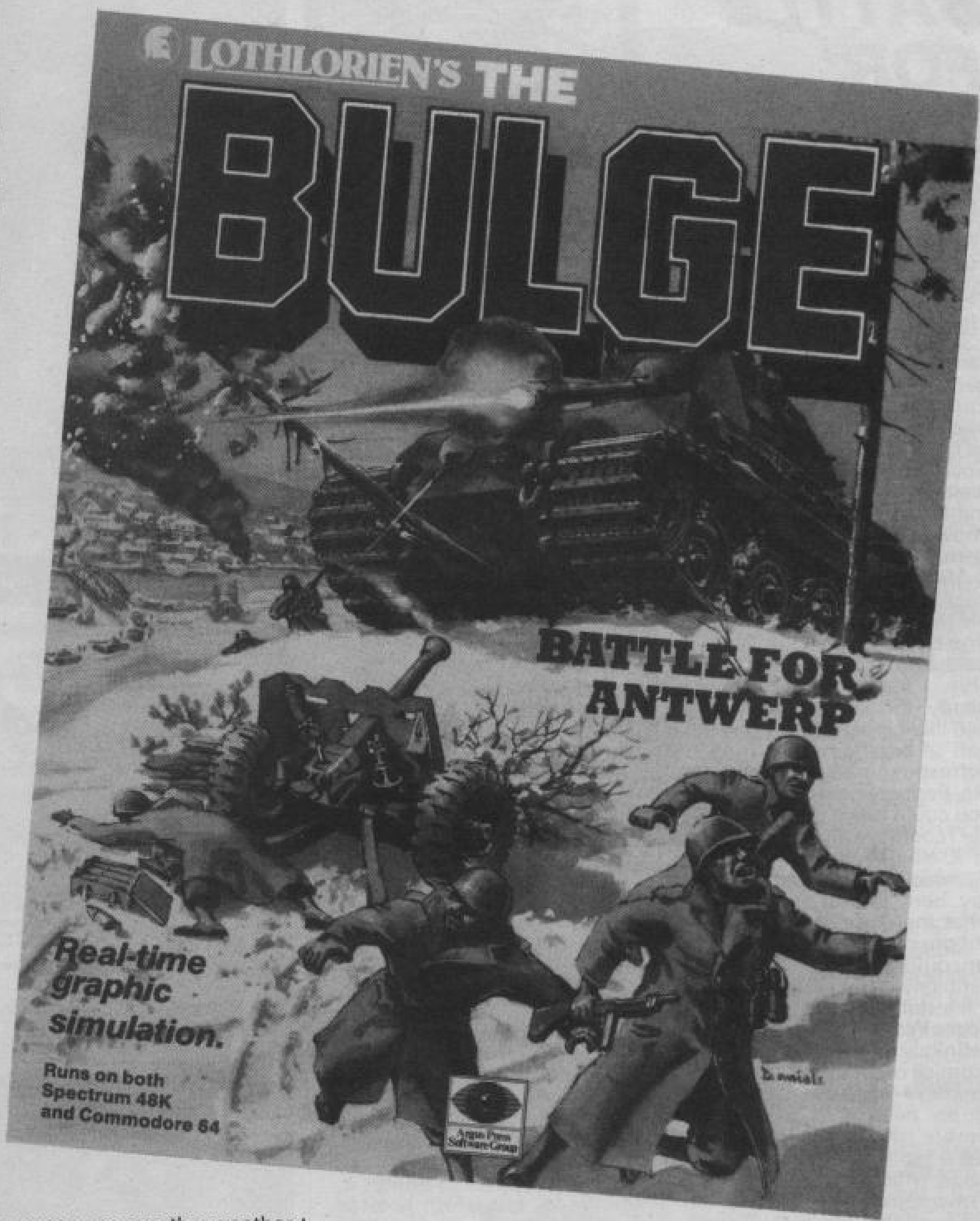
Producer: Lothlorien
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.99**
Authors: **By David Bolton and Colin Gordon**
Published by Argus Press Software

One of the problems of being a software reviewer is that one tends to become very jaded about the games that are available, and the idea of actually playing computer games for recreation often goes down the plughole. Which is why I find it such a pleasant surprise to find myself engrossed in a game, and wanting to carry on playing until I master it. *The Bulge* is such a game; it's highly addictive, and that's a very rare thing amongst strategy games.

I recently reviewed a game by Lothlorien called *Overlords*, which I said at the time looked likely to be their last independent release. *The Bulge* bears that out, and is the first release featuring Lothlorien in the role of design house only. The difference is incredible! It looks as though, freed from the incessant hassle of overdue bills, VAT returns, sales pitches to distributors, printing foul-ups and all the rest of it, Lothlorien have finally managed to concentrate their energies into the game.

The Bulge is without question the biggest (in terms of playing area) strategy game I've seen, it's also incredibly fast (responses, cursor movement, scrolling) and works in simulated real time — half an hour in the game passes every 15 seconds or so. The game is very user-friendly to play, and has the facility to change the background and unit colours — very useful if you're playing on a black and white TV (see the review of *Midway* for

LINE



more thoughts on this!). It can be played as a one player or two player game, and for once neither game loses out.

The scenario follows history pretty closely: the Germans, in a last ditch attempt to avert the course of the war (in December 1944) launched a massive attack at a weak point in the Allied front line which was then lying roughly along the line of the current German/French border. The intention was to break through the Ardennes — a fairly mountainous forest area — and push on towards Antwerp.

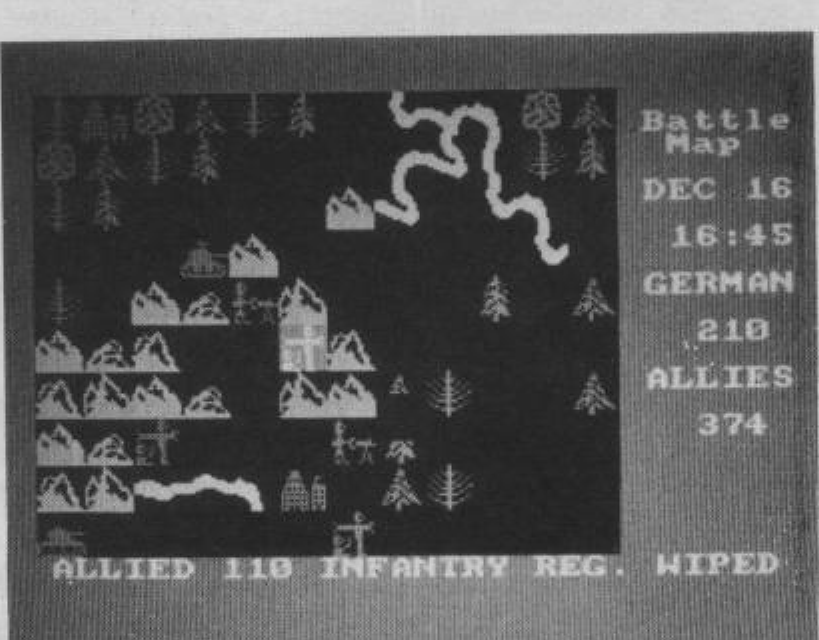
The game presents an accurate representation of the terrain, and a major feature is the weather — in the real Battle of the Bulge, the heavy snow that fell over Christmas was a major factor in stopping the German advance and in the game it can play an equally decisive role. The playing area is (I think) 65 x 100 units, and you have a fully scrolling map window of 24 x 24 units. You also have a 'strategic' map window which shows you about a quarter of the total playing area at once, and you can swap between the two. Using a cursor, you move around the map, giving each of your units directional orders. They move towards their allocated target until told otherwise; combat is determined by strength of numbers and a few other factors, such as infantry in towns, gaining extra defensive power from the town.

Placing your cursor over a unit will cause its strength to be displayed on screen, so it is possible to keep track of relative strengths; but I have so far found that the game moves so fast (even with pausing at every opportunity!) that I have been forced to conduct a mad scramble eastwards to try and contain the advance of the Germans (you can play the German role if you want). At the start of the game each side has around thirty units, and reinforcements arrive during the game; the allies have only two unit types, infantry and armour, while the Germans have both artillery and mobile artillery as well. Unit defeats are shown on a continual scrolling headline on the screen, as are the weather forecasts, and news of reinforcements.

It can be difficult to keep up with all the information being pumped out at you, and play the game at the same time, but it's reassuring to note that the enemy apparently makes mistakes too — not taking the easiest routes, for example. The graphics are clear and crisp, and the colour-changing facility is a boon. The overall presentation has improved immeasurably since Lothlorien's earliest outings, and the influence of Argus on aspects such as pack and booklet design is discrete and totally beneficial. This is one collaboration that I can only applaud — and if Argus' involvement means you will actually see *The Bulge* in your High Street, then it's even better.

If I wanted to find a couple of points in the game to complain about, I could — I mean, obviously it's not perfect, but simply the overwhelming scope and power of the game would make objections niggardly. Lothlorien have come good at last.

Overall Verdict: A CRASH Smash. An excellent Wargame.



BATTLE FOR MIDWAY



Wargaming for the Spectrum 48k

Producer: PSS
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Alan Steele**

PSS have recently scored a remarkable success with a wargame on the C64 called *Theatre Europe*, so I had high hopes of *Midway*, their first outing (as far as I know) into wargames on the Spectrum. It's always good to welcome newcomers to the market, especially when they show every sign of moving in permanently.

Midway breaks new ground in packaging, and looks very impressive; it comes in a large ring-binder, with the cassette held in a plastic sleeve inside. This, I feel sure, will come in handy for keeping note-cards and file-cards in, if you're that sort of person, not to mention correspondence with the bank, etc. Perhaps next time, chaps, if you could make it a little bit bigger I could get all my Access bills in it. . . . Well, you may have guessed that what I'm trying to say here is that I don't know what the price of this game is, but the pack makes it look like a ten quid job, while the game definitely is not.

It's not as bad as the 'Great Space Waste' for example, but it definitely does not live up to the promise of the pack. There are a couple of maps and a bit of blurb on the pack which attempts to elevate the mystique of the game still further; very nice maps, mind you, of Admiral Yamamoto's Operational Plan, but bearing virtually no significance or relation to the game. Furthermore, apparently *Midway* was commended in the strategy games section of the 'Golden Joystick Awards' which are voted by the readers of *Computer & Video Games*. I'll leave the readers of CRASH to vote on that one (as I value my free lunches).

The game itself is fairly straightforward — there are three American groups (two naval and one from the Midway air base) and three Japanese (all naval). Each American group has aircraft (carrier-launched at sea) while the Japanese have four carriers, but all in one group. Your objective is to destroy the four Jap carriers (you play the Yankees) (no racial bias here).

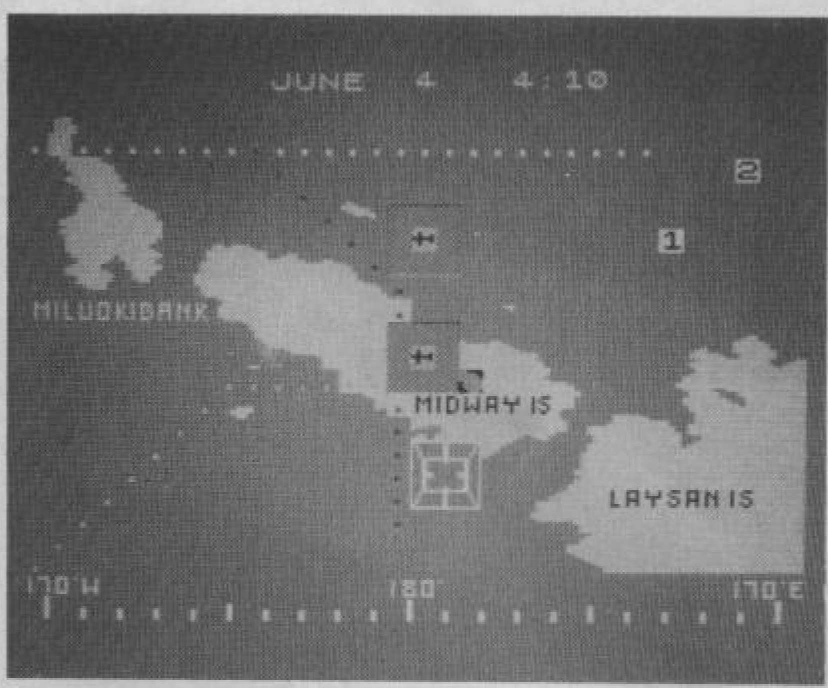
You have two search aircraft (based at Midway Island) which you use to locate and track the Jap forces. In the easy game, the courses of the Japanese groups are actually marked for you, so finding them is a piece of cake; but even in the hard game finding them is not overly difficult, as you can only play on one screen, and there is no scrolling.

Once you have located the enemy you must launch air attacks against them. Each group has effectively three flights of aircraft which can be launched and the real-time element of the game means that you have to wait a minute or two between aircraft launches. Once airborne, the attack groups are directed to the enemy by a cursor — you select the target position, and they move there in their own time. Aircraft run out of fuel after a while, so if you don't remember to land them, they will crash. And that is more or less all the strategy there is in the game: locate the enemy, launch aircraft, blast enemy, land aircraft.

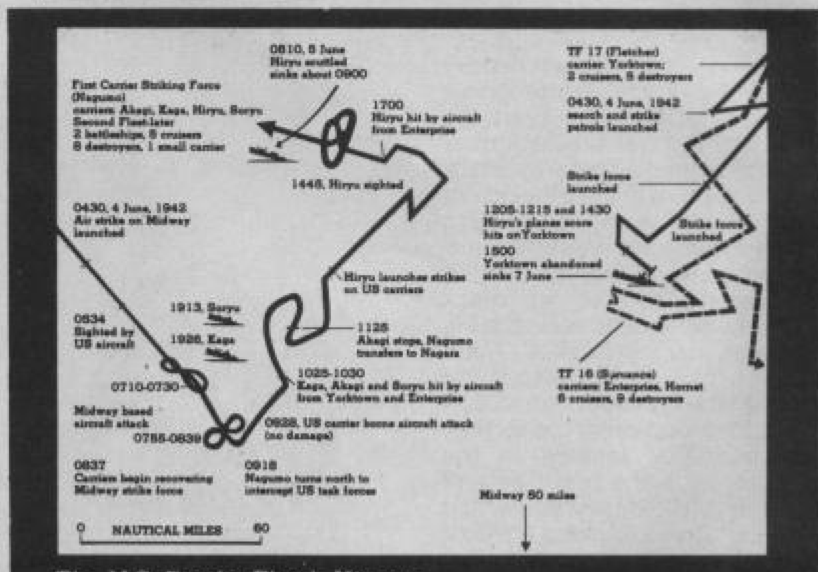
It is certainly far less complex than some other games of a similar type, eg *Air Defence* by CCS which I reviewed a couple of issues back. Of course, what *Midway* has that other strategy games do not is 'arcade' sequences — which are referred to as a 'Real Time Air Attacks' in the booklet. These occur whenever you attack the Japs or vice versa, and what you see is the relevant naval task force laid out before you, and a horde of gnatlike aircraft zooming around above them. You man an anti-aircraft gun and can shoot them. This applies to your own planes as well as the Japs', which I suppose may appeal to some arcade freaks, but which is totally irrelevant to the rest of the game, and irritating in the extreme.

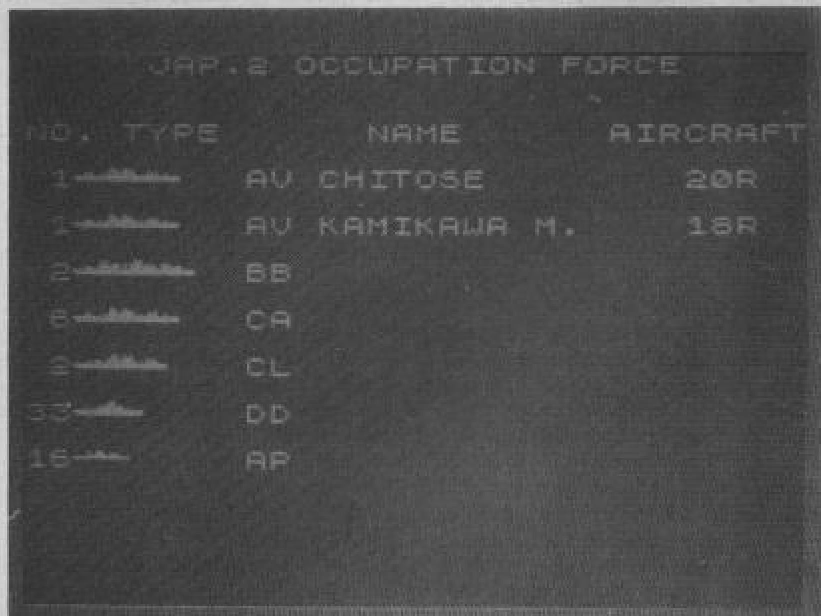
These suicide shoot em up bits are reminiscent of *Beach-Head*, but not as well done; it really does seem to me that, in order to appeal to a wider audience, a vast amount of wargame has been jettisoned to make way for an arcade section which is petty and pointless. There is no indication on the cover of these 'Real Time Air Attacks' and no screen shots to show what these sections are like — this might create a little disappointment with the punters, methinks.

And I have another gripe about *Midway* — it's very difficult to play on a black and white TV, as the status of the game is indicated by the colour of the cursor, which is difficult to determine. Now I know that in these affluent days of economic growth, full employment etc, everyone except me has a colour TV for their computer, but I still believe in designing for the lowest common denominator. So just as, for example, I criticised a game I reviewed last issue because it needed two Spectrums with Interface 1s to be fully playable, so I also think that software designers should bear in mind that their games might be played in mono. Or perhaps put a sticker on the front saying COLOUR TV REQUIRED.



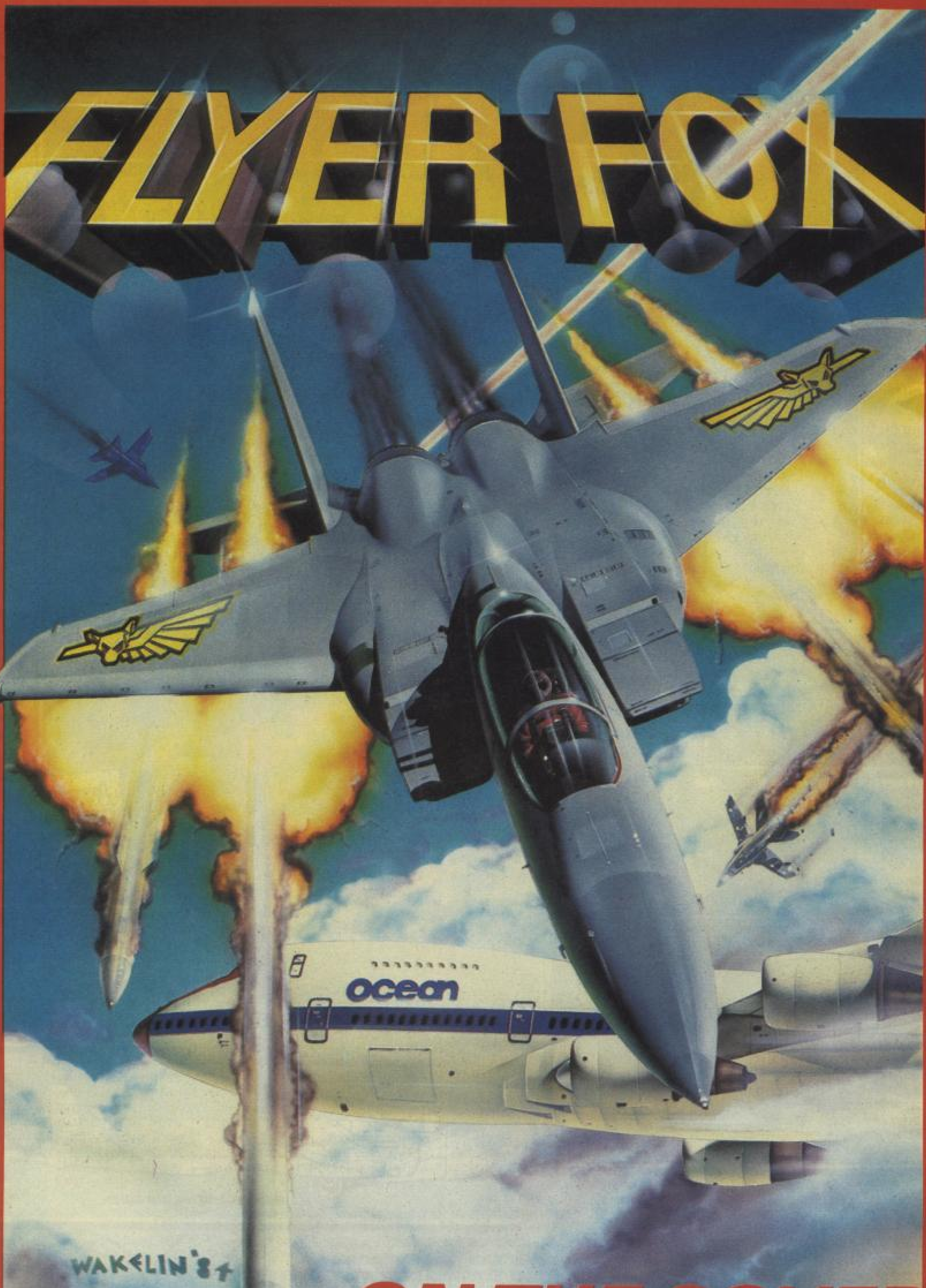
Map screen in BATTLE FOR MIDWAY


The U.S. Pacific Fleet's Victory



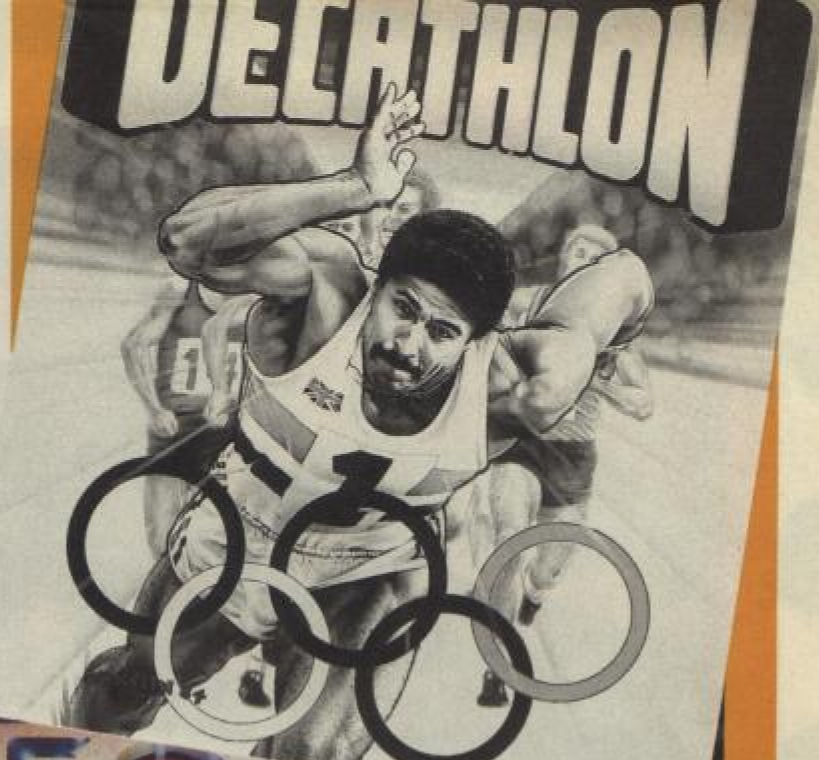
In other aspects the game is up to current standards; the cursor is easy to use, the real-time element works well, information can be accessed about the various fleets and squadrons. But what it comes down to is that there is not enough of a game here — with only two seaborne groups, nine air attack units, and two air search units there are just not enough units under your control to allow for much in the way of thoughtful campaigning.

Overall verdict: a reasonable debut (though not very good value); PSS need to target their audience more directly, and stop messing about with arcade hybrids.



ON THE COVER

When Bob Wakelin was a lad at school, all he ever wanted to do was artwork for comic books. This didn't please his art teacher, who felt that such a talented lad shouldn't channel his artistic energies into something which wasn't quite 'art'. During his three year stint at art college in Wales, his homeland, Bob's lecturers also tried to put him off the idea of working for comics — to little avail.



Shortly after completing the Graphics course, and once he'd finished the obligatory spell on the dole, Bob started work for a Liverpool studio which specialised in artwork for the entertainment industry, and executed a lot of commissions from rock bands, producing artwork for album covers.

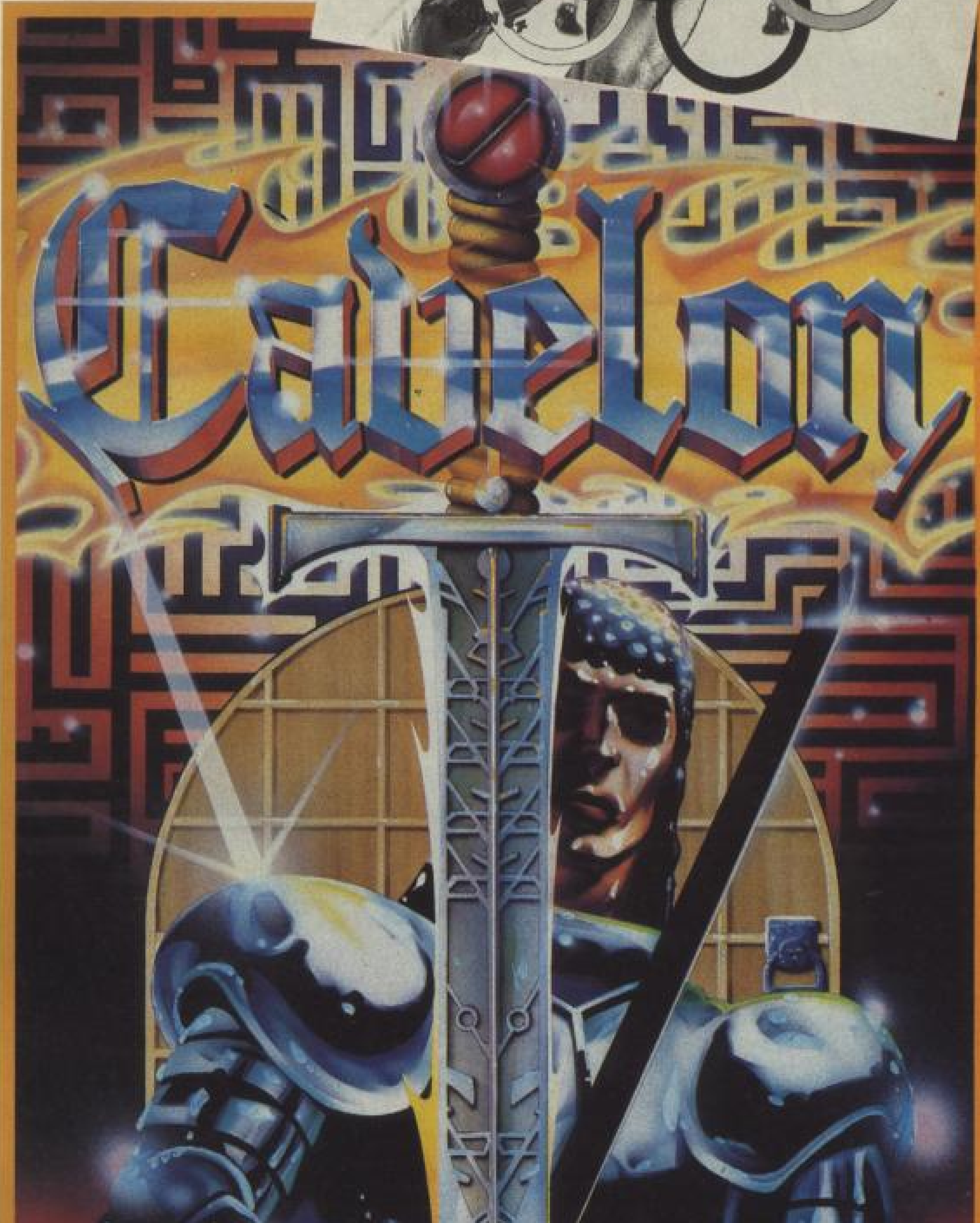
Working his way up from **Whipping Boy,** *graduating to* **Lackey** *and then achieving* **Studio Manager** *status, Bob decided it was time to branch out. Starting as a freelance in 1978, he at last became involved in his first love—comic books—working for Marvel Comics. Sadly, the dollar exchange rate in those days meant it didn't pay too handsomely, though.*

In 1980 Bob joined a band, playing synths. 'It was a whim really. I'd got bored with drawing and some friends had a band. I joined them for a while, and we did reasonably well. Then, as is so often the case, we had a row and split up'. And the manager departed with funds.

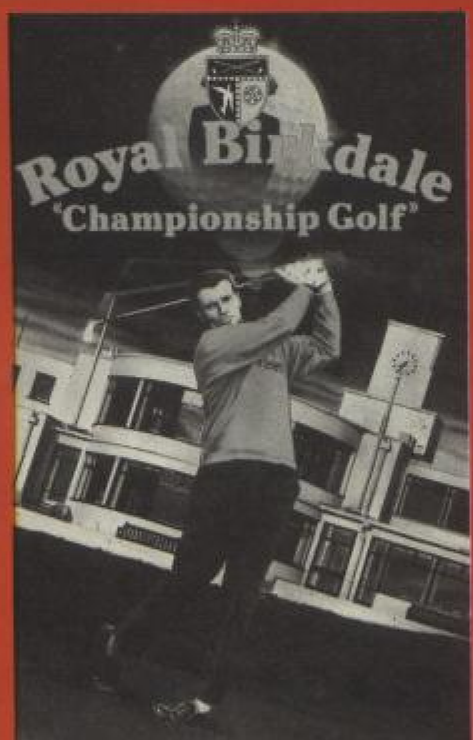
Should the ex-manager of this particular band happen to be a CRASH reader, Bob would like to state publicly that one day, he's going to catch up with you. 'Revenge is a great thing', Bob told me, 'it gives me a reason to live.' There was a slightly evil undercurrent to the jocular tone in which that remark was delivered.

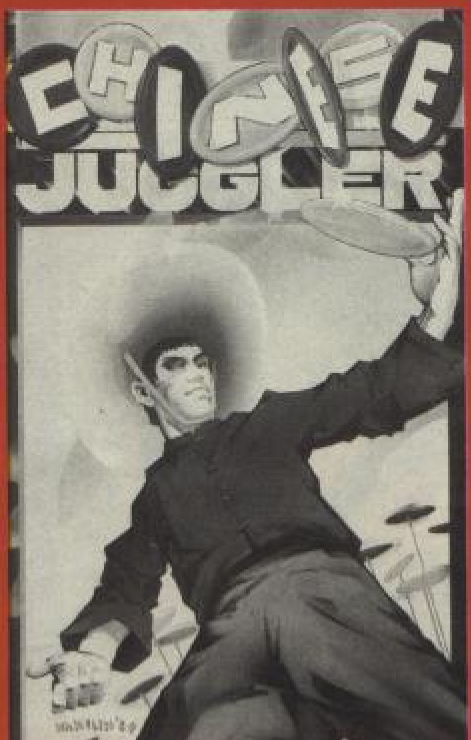
Back in Liverpool, his adopted home town, and with the band's split behind him, Bob started looking for freelance work again. Through the uncle of a friend of a friend, of a friend etc, he learnt that David Ward was starting up a software house down the road in Manchester and was looking for an illustrator.

Just as he did the first job for Dave Ward's new company, **Ocean,** *all sorts of people started to get in touch, offering work. Mrs Wakelin wasn't too pleased with some of the commissions her husband accepted. Something to do with girlie calendars . . . but all that's behind him now. Mr Wakelin does all the inlay illustrations for Ocean.*









'I'm still doing occasional covers for **C&VG** *and comic books too — just so I don't forget how to draw superheroes', Bob explained, 'but Ocean has grown and expanded so quickly that I'm doing nearly half my work for the one client'.*

It takes about four or five days from start to finish to complete a painting for Ocean. 'I spend a day referencing it, and then three or four days completing the artwork. I start off by doing a very tight drawing in pencils, filling in all the detail and then airbrush over so that some of the pencil lines come through the colour. I don't like the tubular, plastic look of most airbrush work and find that the pencil technique avoids that . . . I generally finish the painting off, adding tiny details in gouache or felt pen.'

It would seem a fairly logical move for an artist working on cassette inlays for computer software to transfer his attention to the screen, designing characters or game screens: 'I was asked eighteen months or so ago, but I'm not interested in designing screens at the moment. I'm not a lover of computer graphics . . . I'm not happy with the medium. Sure I'll have to get into it eventually, but at the moment I would get frustrated about not being able to get the detail I want into a picture on a TV screen. Maybe when the technology catches up, and the price of high resolution equipment comes down I'll get involved . . . anyway, I haven't yet done all I can with the traditional media of paint, pencil and ink!'

So what plans does this thirty-two year old 'honorary Liverpudlian' have for the future? 'There are several things I really want to do, not least get back into comics, but I like not knowing what's going to happen next.'

Firmly a freelance, Mr Wakelin explains that planning ahead is not his forte: 'I've got such a short attention span, that if I made plans for the future I'd get bored before I brought them into action, and change everything . . . there isn't really time for forward planning anyway', he added, 'I haven't had more than a couple of days without work in the last few years and haven't taken a holiday. I could only take a holiday if I had a couple of weeks without any work on — but if that happened I would be pacing up and down the room, biting my fingernails, worrying what was going wrong, rather than enjoying a holiday'.

The Wakelin fingernails are fairly safe, methinks. . . .

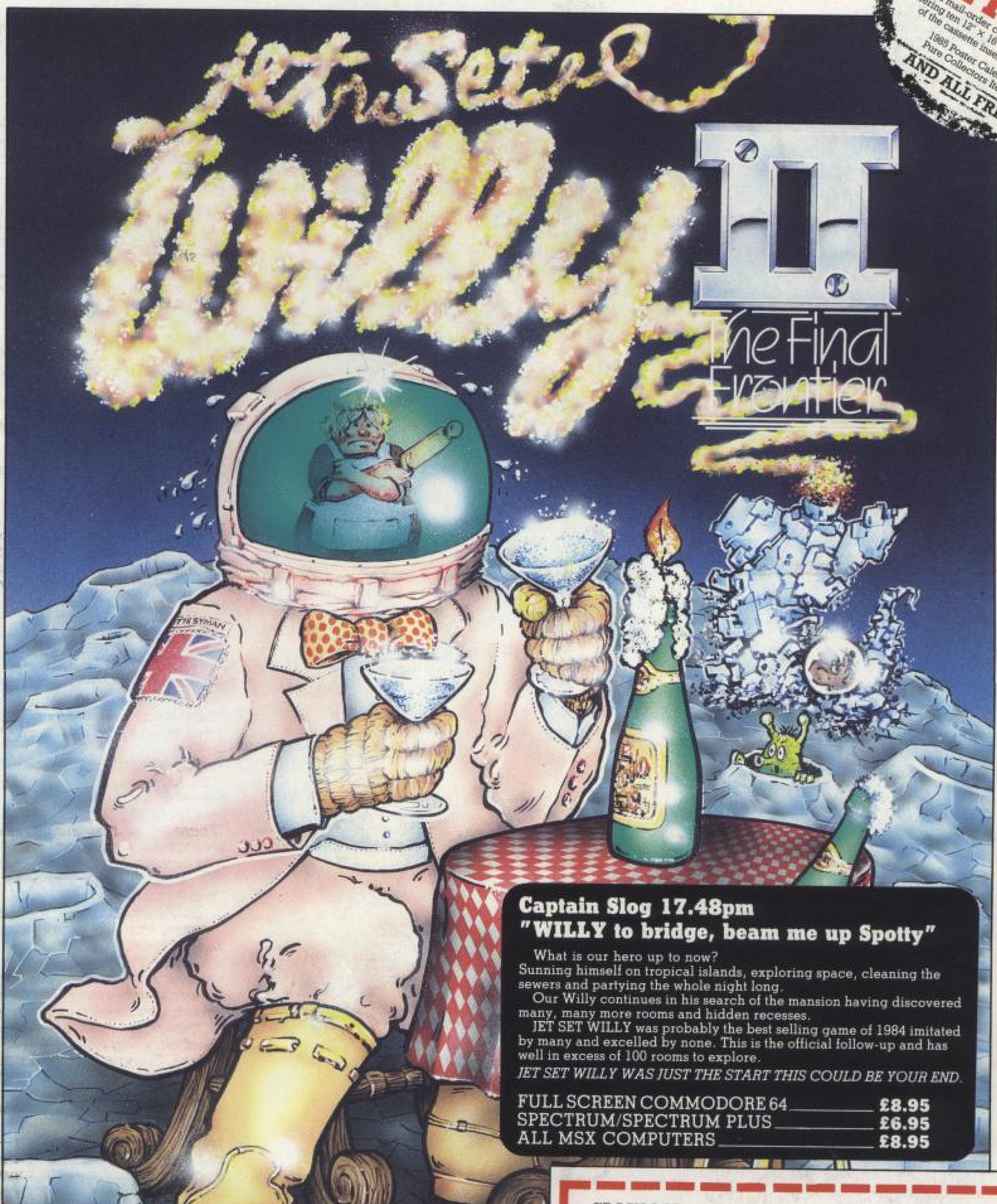
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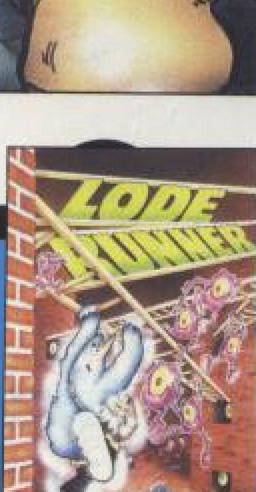
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